

Christians than any other, and lasted longer, as appears by the testimonies of Justin Martyr, Origen, Irenæus, Tertullian, Minutius Felix, and others, cited by Grotius on this place. (2.) They shall speak with new tongues, which they had never learned or been acquainted with; and this was both a miracle (a miracle upon the mind) for the confirming of the truth of the gospel, and a means of spreading the gospel among those nations that had not heard it. It saved the preachers a vast labour in learning the languages; and no doubt they who by miracle were made masters of languages, were complete masters of them and of all their native elegancies, which were proper both to instruct and affect, which would very much recommend them and their preaching. (3.) They shall take up serpents; This was fulfilled in Paul, who was not hurt by the viper that fastened on his hand, which was acknowledged a great miracle by the barbarous people, *Acts* xviii. 5, 6. They shall be kept unhurt by that generation of vipers among whom they live, and by the malice of the old serpent. (4.) If they be compelled by their persecutors to drink any deadly poisonous thing, it shall not hurt them: Of which very thing some instances are found in ecclesiastical history. (5.) They shall not only be preserved from hurt themselves, but they shall be enabled to do good to others; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover, as multitudes had done by their Master's healing touch. Many of the elders of the church had this power, as appears by *James* v. 14, where, as an instituted sign of this miraculous healing, they are said to anoint the sick with oil in the name of the Lord: With what assurance of success might they go about the executing of their commission, when they had such credentials as these to produce.

19. ¶ So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. 20. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

Here is, 1. Christ welcomed into the upper world, ver. 19. after the Lord had spoken what he had to say to his disciples, he went up into heaven in a cloud; which we have a particular account of, *Acts* i. 9. and he had not only an admission, but an abundant entrance into his kingdom there; he was received up, received in state with loud acclamations of the heavenly hosts; and he sat on the right hand of God: sitting is a posture of rest, for now he had finished his work, and a posture of rule, for now he took possession of his kingdom; he sat at the right hand of God, which notes the sovereign dignity he is advanced to, and the universal agency he is intrusted with. Whatever God doth concerning us, gives to us, or accepts from us, it is by his son. Now he is glorified with the glory he had before the world.

2. Christ welcomed in this lower world: his being believed on in the world, and received up into glory are put together, *1 Tim.* iii. 16. (1.) We have here the apostles working diligently for him; they went forth and preached every where far and near; though the doctrine they preached was spiritual and heavenly, and directly contrary to the spirit and genius of the world, though it met with abundance of opposition, and was utterly destitute of all secular supports and advantages, yet the preachers of it were neither afraid nor ashamed; they were so industrious in spreading the gospel, that within a few years the sound of it went forth into the ends of the earth. *Rom.* x. 18. (2.) We have here God working effectually with them, to make their labours successful, by confirming the word with signs following, partly by the miracles that were wrought upon the bodies of people, which were divine seals to the Christian doctrine, and partly the influence it had upon the minds of people through the operation of the Spirit of God, see *Heb.* ii. 4. These were properly signs following the word, the reformation of the world, the destruction of idolatry, the conversion of sinners, the comfort of saints; and these signs still follow it, and that they may do so more and more, for the honour of Christ and the good of mankind, the evangelist prays and teaches us to say Amen. Father in heaven thus let thy name be hallowed, and let thy kingdom come.

THE END OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK.

AN EXPOSITION, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, Of the GOSPEL according to St. LUKE.

We are now entering into the Labours of another evangelist; his name Luke; which some take to be a contraction of Lucilius; born at Antioch, so St. Jerom; Some think the only one of all the penmen of the Scripture that was not of the seed of Israel: He was a Jewish proselyte, and, as some conjecture, converted to Christianity by the ministry of St. Paul at Antioch; and after his coming into Macedonia, *Acts* xvi. 10. he was his constant companion. He had employed himself in the study and practice of physic, hence Paul calls him Luke the beloved Physician, *Col.* iv. 14. And some of the pretended ancients tell you he was a painter, and drew a picture of the virgin Mary. But Dr. Whitby thinks there is nothing certain to the contrary, and that therefore it is probable he was one of the seventy disciples, and a follower of Christ when he was here upon earth; and if so he was a native Israelite; And I see not what can be objected against this, except some uncertain traditions of the ancients, which we can build nothing upon; and against which may be opposed the testimonies of Origen and Epiphanius, who both say that he was one of the seventy disciples. He is supposed to have written this gospel when he was associate with St. Paul in his travels, and by directions from him; And some think this is the brother whom Paul speaks of, *2 Cor.* viii. 18. whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches of Christ; as if the meaning of it were, that he was celebrated in all the churches for writing this gospel; and that St. Paul means this when he speaks sometimes of his gospel, as *Rom.* ii. 16. But there is no ground at all for that. Dr. Cave observes, that his way and manner of writing is accurate and exact, his style polite and elegant, sublime and lofty, yet perspicuous; and that he expresseth himself in a vein of purer Greek than is to be found in the other writers of the holy story: Thus he relates divers things more copiously than the other evangelists; and thus he especially treats of those things which relate to the priestly office of Christ. It is uncertain when or about what time this gospel was written: Some think it was written in Achaia, during his travels with Paul seventeen years, twenty-two years say others, after Christ's ascension; others, that it was written at Rome, a little before he wrote his history of the *Acts of the Apostles*, (which is a continuation of this) when he was there with Paul, while he was a prisoner and preaching in his own hired house, with which the history of the *Acts* concludes; and then Paul saith, only Luke was with him, *2 Tim.* iv. 11. When he was under that voluntary confinement with Paul, he had leisure to compile these two histories: And many excellent writings the church has been indebted to a prison for; If so, it was written about twenty-seven years after Christ's ascension, and about the fourth year of Nero. Jerom saith he died when he was eighty-four years of age, and was never married. Some write, that he suffered martyrdom; but if he did, where and when is uncertain. Nor indeed is there much more credit to be given to the Christian traditions concerning the writers of the New Testament, than to the Jewish traditions concerning those of the Old Testament.

CHAP. I.

The narrative which this evangelist gives us (or rather God by him) of the life of Christ; begins earlier than either Matthew or Mark; we have reason to thank God for them all, as we have for all the gifts and graces of Christ's ministers, which in one make up what is wanting in the other, while all put together make a harmony. In this chapter we have, (1.) Luke's preface to his gospel, or his epistle dedicatory to his friend Theophilus, ver. 1-4. (2.) The prophecy and history of the conception of John Baptist, who was Christ's forerunner, ver. 5-25. (3.) The annunciation of the virgin Mary, or the notice given to her

that she should be the mother of the Messiah, ver. 26-38. (4.) The interview between Mary the mother of Jesus, and Elizabeth the mother of John, when they were both with child of those pregnant births, and the prophecies they both uttered upon that occasion, ver. 39-56. (5.) The birth and circumcision of John Baptist, six months before the birth of Christ, ver. 57-66. (6.) Zechariah's song of praise, in thankfulness for the birth of John, and in prospect of the birth of Jesus, ver. 67, 68, 69. (7.) A short account of John Baptist's infancy, ver. 80. And these do more than give us an entertaining narrative; they will lead us into the understanding of the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh

1. **F**ORASMUCH as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, 2. Even as they delivered them unto us; which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word: 3. It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, 4. That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.

Complimental prefaces and dedications, the language of flattery, and the food and fuel of pride, are justly condemned by the wise and good; but it doth not therefore follow that such as are useful and instructive are to be run down, such is this here, in which St. Luke dedicates his gospel to his friend Theophilus, not as to his *patron* though he was a man of honour, to protect it, but as to his *pupil* to learn it and hold it fast. It is not certain who this Theophilus was; the name signifies a *friend of God*, and some think it doth not mean any particular person, but every one that is a *lover of God*; and Dr. Hammond quotes some of the ancients understanding it so: and then it teaches us, that those who are truly lovers of God will heartily welcome the gospel of Christ, the design and tendency of which is to bring us to God. But it is rather to be understood of some particular person, probably a magistrate: because Luke gives him here the same title of respect which St. Paul gave to Festus the governor, *κατάριε*, *Acts* xxvi. 25. which we there translate *most noble Festus* and here *most excellent Theophilus*. Note, Religion doth not destroy civility and good manners but teaches us according to the usages of our country, to *give honour to them to whom honour is due*.

Now observe here,

1. Why St. Luke wrote this gospel; it is certain he was moved by the Holy Ghost, not only to the writing, but in the writing of it; but in both he was moved as a reasonable creature and not as a mere machine; and he was made to consider,

1. That the things he wrote of were things that were *most surely believed among all Christians*, and therefore things which they ought to be instructed in, that they may know what they believe; and things which ought to be transmitted to posterity, who are as much concerned in them as we are; and in order to that to be committed to writing, which is the surest way of conveyance to the ages to come. He will not write about things of doubtful dispute, things about which Christians may safely differ from one another and hesitate within themselves; but the things which are and ought to be *most surely believed*, *κατάστατα περὶ ἀποστολικῶν μαρτυρίων*; the things which were *performed*; so some; which Christ and his apostles did, and did with such circumstances as gave a full assurance that they were really done; so that they have gained an established lasting credit. Note, Though it is not the foundation of our faith, yet it is a support to it, that the articles of our creed are things that have been *long most surely believed*. The doctrine of Christ is what thousands of the wisest and best of men have *ventured their souls upon* with the greatest assurance and satisfaction.

(2.) That it was requisite there should be a *declaration made in order of those things*: that the history of the life of Christ should be *methodized* and committed to writing for the greater certainty of the conveyance. When things are *put in order*, we know the better where to find them for our own use, and how to keep them for the benefit of others.

(3.) That there were many who had undertaken to publish narratives of the life of Christ; many well-meaning people that *designed well and did well*, and what they published had *done good*, though not done by divine inspiration, nor so well done as might be, nor intended for perpetuity. Note, 1. The labours of others in the gospel of Christ, if faithful and honest, we ought to *commend and encourage*, and not to *despise*, though chargeable with many deficiencies. (2.) Others services to Christ must not be reckoned to supersede ours, but rather to quicken them.

(4.) That the truth of the things he had to write was *confirmed by the concurring testimony* of those that were competent and unexceptionable witnesses of them; that had been published in writing already, and what he was now about to publish, agreed with that which had been delivered by word of mouth, over and over by those who from the beginning were *eye-witnesses and ministers of the word*, ver. 2. Note, (1.) The apostles were *ministers of the word of Christ*, who is *the word*, so some understand it, or of the doctrine of Christ, they have received it themselves ministered it to others, 1 John i. 1. They had not a gospel to make as masters, but a gospel to preach as ministers, (2.) The *ministers of the word* were *eye-witnesses* of the things which they preached, and, which is also included, *ear-witnesses*: They did themselves *hear* the doctrine of Christ, and *see* his miracles, and had them not by report at second hand; and therefore could not but speak with the greatest assurance the things they had *seen and heard*, *Acts* iv. 20. (3.) They were *so from the beginning* of Christ's ministry, ver. 2. He had his disciples with him when he wrought his *first miracle*, John ii. 11. They *companied with him all the time that he went in and out among them*, *Acts* i. 21. so that they not only heard and saw all that which was sufficient to confirm their faith, but if there had been any thing to shock it they had opportunity to discover it. (4.) The *written gospel* which we have to this day, exactly agrees with the gospel that was *preached in the first days* of the church. (5.) That he himself had a *perfect understanding of the things* he wrote of *from the first*, ver. 3. Some think here is a tacit reflection upon those that had written before him, that they had not a *perfect understanding* of what they wrote, and therefore here am I, send me; (*facit indignatio versum*) or rather without reflecting on them, he asserts his own ability for this undertaking; it seemed good to me, having attained to the exact knowledge of all things, *αὐθις, from above*, so I think it should be rendered; for if he meant the same with *from the beginning*, ver. 2. as our translation intimates, he would have used the same word. (1.) He had *diligently searched* into these things, had *followed* after them; so the word is, as the Old Testament prophets are said to have *inquired and searched diligently*, 1 Pet. i. 10. He had not taken things so easily and superficially as others who had written before him, but made it his business to inform himself concerning particulars. (2.) He had received his intelligence not only by tradition, as others had done, but by revelation, confirming that tradition and securing him from any error or mistake in the recording of it. He sought it *from above*, so the word intimates, and from thence he had it; thus, like Elihu, he *searched his knowledge from afar*. He wrote his history as Moses wrote his, of things reported by tradition, but *ratified by inspiration*. (3.) He could therefore say, that he had a *perfect understanding* of these things: He knew them, *ἐπίστας, accurately, exactly*. Now having received this *from above*, it seemed good to me to communicate it, for such a talent as this ought not to be buried.

2. Observe why he sent it to *Theophilus*: I wrote unto thee these things *in order*, not that thou mayest give reputation to the work, but that thou

mayest be edified by it, ver. 4. *That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed*. (1.) It is implied that he had been *instructed* in these things either before his baptism or since, or both, according to the rule, *Matt.* xxviii. 19, 20. Probably Luke had baptized him, and knew how well instructed he was; *κατὰ τὴν ἐκπαίδευσιν* concerning which thou hast been catechised, so the word is: the most knowing Christians began with being catechised. Theophilus was a person of quality, perhaps of noble birth, and so much the more pains should be taken with such when they are young, to teach them the principles of the oracles of God, that they may be fortified against the temptations, and furnished for the opportunities of a high condition in the world. (2.) It was intended that he should *know the certainty of those things*, should understand them more clearly and believe them more firmly. There is a *certainty* in the gospel of Christ, there is that therein which we may build upon: And those who have been well instructed in the things of God, when they were young, should afterwards give diligence to *know the certainty* of those things; to know not only what we believe, but why we believe it, that we may be able to give a *reason of the hope that is in us*.

5. **T**HERE was in the days of Herod the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the LORD, blameless. 7. And they had no child, because that Elizabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years. 8. And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, 9. According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the LORD. 10. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without, at the time of incense. 11. And there appeared unto him an angel of the LORD, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. 13. But the angel said unto him, Fear not Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard: and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. 14. And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth. 15. For he shall be great in the sight of the LORD, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. 16. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the LORD their God. 17. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the LORD. 18. And Zacharias said unto the angel, whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. 19. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God: and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings, 20. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. 21. And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple. 22. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. 23. And it came to pass, that as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house. 24. And after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, 25. Thus hath the LORD dealt with me, in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

The two preceding evangelists had agreed to begin the gospel with the baptism of John and his ministry, which commenced about six months before our Saviour's public ministry, (and now things being near a crisis six months was a *deal* of time, which before was but a *little*) and therefore this evangelist designing to give a more particular account than had been given of our Saviour's conception and birth, determines to do so of John Baptist; for in both he was his harbinger and forerunner, the morning-star to the Sun of righteousness; not only because it is commonly reckoned a satisfaction and entertainment to know something of the original extraction and early days of those who afterwards prove great men; but because in the beginning of these there were many things miraculous, and prefaces of what they afterwards proved; in these verses our inspired historian begins as early as the conception of John Baptist. Now observe here,

First, The account given of *his parents*, ver. 5. They lived in the days of *Herod the king*, who was a foreigner, and a deputy for the Romans, who had lately made Judea a province of the empire. This is taken notice of to shew that the scepter was quite departed from Judah, and therefore now was the time for Shiloh to come, according to Jacob's prophecy, *Gen.* xlix. 10. The family of David was now sunk, when it was to rise and flourish again in the Messiah. Note, None ought to despair of the reviving and flourishing of religion, even then when civil liberties are lost: Israel is enslaved, yet then comes the glory of Israel.

Now the father of John Baptist was a priest, a son of Aaron, his name Zacharias. No families in the world were ever so honoured of God as those of Aaron and David; with one was made the covenant of priesthood, with the other that of royalty; they had both forfeited their honour, yet the gospel

gospel again puts honour upon both in their latter days, on that of Aaron in John Baptist, on that of David in Christ, and then they were both extinguished and lost. Christ was of David's house, his forerunner of Aaron's, for his priestly agency and influence opened the way to his kingly authority and dignity. Thus Zacharias was of the course of Abia; when in David's time the family of Aaron was multiplied, he divided them into twenty-four courses, for the more regular performance of their office, that it might never be either neglected for want of hands or ingrossed by a few. The eighth of those was that of Abia, 1 Chron. xxiv. 10. who was descended from Eleazar, Aaron's eldest son: but Dr. Lightfoot suggests that many of the families of the priests were lost in the captivity, so that after their return they took in those of other families, but retaining the names of the heads of the respective courses. The wife of this Zacharias was of the daughters of Aaron too, and her name *Elisabeth*, the very same name with Elishebah the wife of Aaron, Exod. vi. 23. The priests (Josephus saith) were very careful to marry within their own family, that they might maintain the dignity of the priesthood, and keep it without mixture.

Now that which is observed concerning Zacharias and Elisabeth is,

1. That they were a very religious couple, ver. 6. *They were both righteous before God*; they were so in his sight, whose judgment we are sure is according to truth; they were sincerely and really so. They are righteous indeed that are so before God, as Noah in his generation, Gen. vii. 1. they approved themselves to him, and he was graciously pleased to accept them. It is a happy thing when those that are joined to each other in marriage are both joined to the Lord: and it is especially requisite that the priests, the Lord's ministers, should with their yoke-fellows be *righteous before God*, that they may be examples to the flock, and rejoice their hearts. *They walked in all the commandments and ordinances in the Lord blameless.* (1.) Their being *righteous before God* was evidenced by the course and tenor of their conversations; they shewed it not by their talk but by their works, by the way they walked in and the rule they walked by. (2.) They were of a piece with themselves; for their devotions and their conversations agreed. They walked not only in the ordinances of the Lord, which related to divine worship, but in the commandments of the Lord, which have reference to all the instances of a good conversation, and must be regarded. (3.) They were universal in their obedience, not that they never did in any thing come short of their duty, but it was their constant care and endeavour, to come up to it. (4.) Herein though they were not *sinless*, yet they were *blameless*; no body could charge them with any open scandalous sin; they lived *honestly* and *inoffensively*, as ministers and their families are in a special manner concerned to do, that the ministry be not blamed in their blame.

2. That they had been long childless, ver. 7. Children are a *heritage of the Lord*. But there are many of his heirs in a married state that yet are denied this *heritage*, they are valuable deserving blessings; yet many there are who are *righteous before God*, and if they had children would bring them up in his fear, that yet are not thus blessed, while the *men of this world* are full of children, Psalm xvii. 14. *And send forth their little ones like a flock*, John xxi. 11. Elisabeth was *barren*, and they began to despair of ever having children, for they were both now *well stricken in years*, when the women that have been most fruitful leave off bearing. Many eminent persons were born of mothers that had been long childless, as Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samson, Samuel, and so here John Baptist, to make their birth the more remarkable, and the blessing of it the more valuable to their parents; and to shew that when God keeps his people long waiting for mercy, he sometimes is pleased to recompense them for their patience, by doubling the worth of it when it comes.

Secondly, The appearing of an angel to his father Zacharias, as he was ministering in the temple, ver. 8—11. Zacharias the prophet was the last of the Old Testament that was conversant with angels; and Zacharias the priest the first in the New Testament. Observe,

1. How Zacharias was employed in the service of God, ver. 8. He executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, it was his week for waiting, and he was upon duty. Though his family was not built up or made to grow, yet he made conscience of doing the work of his own place and day. Though we have not desired mercies, yet we must keep close to *injoined services*; and in our diligent and constant attendance on them, we may hope that mercy and comfort will come at last. Now it fell to Zacharias lot, to burn incense morning and evening for that week of his waiting, as other services fell to other priests by lot likewise. The services were directed by lot, that somemight not decline them and others ingross them, and that the disposal of the lot being from the Lord they might have the satisfaction of a divine call to the work. This was not the high priest's burning incense on the day of atonement, as some have fondly imagined, and thought by that to find out the time of our Saviour's birth; but it is plain it was the burning of the daily incense at the altar of incense, ver. 11. which was in the temple, ver. 9. not in the most holy place into which the high priest entered. The Jews say, that one and the same priest burned not incense twice in all his days, there were such a multitude of them, at least never more than one week: it is very probable that this was upon the sabbath-day, because there was a multitude of people attending, ver. 10. which ordinarily was not on a week-day; and thus God usually puts honour upon his own day. And then if Dr. Lightfoot reckon with the help of the Jewish calendars that this course of Abia fell on the seventeenth day of the third month, the month Sivan, answering to part of May and part of June, it is worth observing that the portions of the law and the prophets, which were read this day in the synagogues were very agreeable to that which was a doing in the temple; namely, the law of the Nazarites, Numb. vi. and the conception of Samson, Judges xiii.

While Zacharias was burning incense in the temple, the whole multitude of the people were praying without, ver. 10. Dr. Lightfoot saith there were constantly in the temple, at the hour of prayer, the priests of that course also that then served, and if it were the sabbath-day, those of that course that had been in waiting the week before, and the Levites that served under the priests, and the men of the station, as the Rabbins call them, who were the representatives of the people, in putting their hands upon the head of the sacrifices, and many besides, who, moved by devotions, left their employment for that time, to be present at the service of God: and those would make up a great multitude especially on sabbaths and feast days: now these all addressed themselves to their devotion (in mental prayer, for their voice was not heard) when by the tinkling of a bell they had notice that the priest was gone in to burn incense. Now observe here, (1.) That the true Israel of God always were a praying people; and prayer is the great and principal piece of service by which we give honour to God and fetch in favours from him, and keep up our communion with him. (2.) That then when ritual and ceremonial appointments were in full force, as this of burning incense, yet moral and spiritual duties were required to go along with them, and were principally looked at. David knew that when he was at a distance from the altar his prayer might be heard without incense, for it might be directed before God as incense, Psalm cxli. 2. But when he was compassing the altar, the incense could not be accepted without prayer no more than the shell without the kernel. 3. That it is not enough for us to be where God is worshipped, if our hearts do not join in the worship and go along with the

minister in all the parts of it. If he burn the incense never so well in the most pertinent judicious lively prayer, if we be not at the same time praying in concurrence with him what will it avail us? 4. All the prayers we offer up to God here in his courts are acceptable and successful only in virtue of the incense of Christ's intercession in the temple of God above. To this usage in the temple service there seems to be an allusion, Rev. viii. 1, 3, 4. where we find that there was silence in heaven, as there was in the temple for half an hour, while the people were silently lifting up their hearts to God in prayer; and that there was an angel, the angel of the covenant, who offered up much incense with the prayers of all saints before the throne. We cannot expect an interest in Christ's intercession if we do not pray and pray with our spirits, and continue instant in prayer. Nor can we expect that the best of our prayers should gain acceptance and bring in an answer of peace but through the mediation of Christ, who ever lives making intercession.

2. How, when he was thus employed, he was honoured with a messenger, a special messenger sent from heaven to him, ver. 11. There appeared unto him an angel of the Lord. Some observe, that we never read of an angel appearing in the temple with a message from God but only this one to Zacharias, because there God had other ways of making known his mind, as the Urim and Thummim, and by a still small voice from between the cherubims; but the ark and the oracle were wanting in the second temple, and therefore when an express is to be sent to a priest in the temple an angel was to be employed in it, and thereby the gospel was to be introduced, for that, as the law was given at first very much by the ministry of angels, the appearance of which was often read of in the Gospels and the Acts; though the design both of the law and of the gospel, when brought to perfect on, was to settle another way of correspondence, more spiritual between God and man. This angel stood on the right side of the altar of incense, the north side of it, saith Dr. Lightfoot, on Zacharias's right hand; compare this with Zech. iii. where Satan stands at the right hand of Joshua the priest to resist him; but Zacharias had a good angel standing at his right hand to encourage him. Some think this angel appeared coming out of the most holy place, which led him to stand at the right side of the altar.

3. What impression this made upon Zacharias, ver. 12. When Zacharias saw him, it was a surprise upon him, even to a degree of terror, for he was troubled, and fear fell upon him, ver. 12. Though he was righteous before God, and blameless in his conversation, yet he could not be without some frightful apprehensions at the sight of one whose visage and surrounding lustre spoke him more than human. Ever since man sinned his mind has been unable to bear the glory of such revelations, and his conscience afraid of evil tidings brought by them; even Daniel himself could not bear it, Dan. x. 8. And for this reason God chooseth to speak to us by men like ourselves, whose terror shall not make us afraid.

Thirdly, The message which the angel had to deliver to him, ver. 13. He began his message as angels generally did, with *fear not*. Perhaps it had never been Zacharias's lot to burn incense before, and being a very serious conscientious man we may suppose him full of care to do it well, and perhaps when he saw the angel was afraid lest he came to rebuke him for some mistake or miscarriage; no, saith the angel, *fear not*; I have no ill tidings to bring thee from heaven. *Fear not*, but compose thyself, that thou mayest with a sedate and even spirit receive the message I have to deliver to thee.

Let us see what this is,

1. The prayers he has often made shall now receive an answer of peace. *Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard.* (1.) If he means his particular prayer for a son to build up his family, it must be the prayers he had formerly made for that mercy, when he was likely to have children, but we may suppose, now he and his wife were both well stricken in years, as they had done expecting it, so they had done praying for it; like Moses, it sufficeth them, and they speak no more to God of that matter, Deut. iii. 28. But God will now in giving this mercy look a great way back to the prayers that he had made long since for and with his wife, as Isaac for and with his, Gen. xxv. 21. Note, Prayers of faith are filed in heaven and are not forgotten, though the thing prayed for is not presently given in. Prayers made when we were young and coming into the world, may be answered when we are old and going out of the world. But, (2.) If he means the prayers he was now making and offering up with his incense, we may suppose those were according to the duty of his place, for the Israel of God and their welfare, and the performance of the promises made to them concerning the Messiah and the coming of his kingdom; this prayer of thine is now heard, for thy wife shall now shortly conceive him that is to be the Messiah's forerunner. Some of the Jewish writers themselves say, that the priest when he burnt incense prayed for the salvation of the whole world; and now that prayer shall be heard. Or, (3.) In general, the prayers thou now makest, and all thy prayers, are accepted of God, and come up for a memorial before him, as the angel said to Cornelius, when he visited him at prayer, Acts x. 30, 31. and this shall be the sign that thou art accepted of God, Elisabeth shall bear thee a son. Note, It is very comfortable to praying people to know that their prayers are heard; and those mercies are doubly sweet that are given in answer to prayer.

2. He shall have a son in his old age by Elisabeth his wife, who had been long barren, that by this birth, which was next door to miraculous, people might be prepared to receive and believe a virgin's bringing forth a son, which was perfectly miraculous. He is directed what name to give his son; call him John; in Hebrew Johanan, a name we often meet with in the Old Testament: it signifies *gracious*. The priests must beseech God that he will be gracious, Mal. i. 9. and must so bless the people, Numb. vi. 25. Zacharias was now praying thus, and the angel tells him his prayer is heard, and he shall have a son, whom, in token of an answer to his prayer, he shall call *gracious*, or the Lord will be gracious; Isa. xxx. 18, 19.

This son shall be the joy of his family and of all his relations, ver. 14. he shall be another Isaac, thy laughter; and some think that is partly intended in his name, John; he shall be a welcome child. Thou for thy part shalt have joy and gladness. Note, Mercies that have been long waited for, when they come at last are the more acceptable. He shall be such a son as thou shalt have reason to rejoice in; many parents if they could foresee what their children would prove, instead of rejoicing at their birth would wish they had never been; but I will tell thee what thy son will be; and then thou wilt not need to rejoice with him trembling at his birth, as the best must do, but mayst rejoice with triumph at it. Nay, and many shall rejoice at his birth; all the relations of the family will rejoice in it and all its well-wishers, because it is for the honour and comfort of the family, ver. 58. All good people will rejoice that such a religious couple as Zachary and Elisabeth have a son, because they will give him a good education, such as it may be hoped will make him a public blessing to his generation. Yea and perhaps many shall rejoice by an unaccountable instinct, as a preface of the joyous days the gospel will introduce.

4. This son shall be a mighty favourite of heaven, and a mighty blessing to the earth. The honour of having a son is nothing to the honour of having such a son.

1. He shall be great in the sight of the Lord; and those are great indeed that are so in God's sight, not those that are in the eye of a vain and carnal

ral world. God will *set him before his face* continually, will employ him in his work, and send him on his errands, and that will make him truly great and honourable. He shall be a prophet, yea more than a prophet, and upon that account as great as any that ever were born of women, *Matt. xi. 11.* He shall live very much retired from the world, out of men's sight; and when he makes a public appearance it will be very mean, but he shall be much, he shall be *great in the sight of the Lord.*

2. He shall be a Nazarite; set apart to God from every thing that is polluting; and in token of that according to the law of Nazaritiship, he shall *drink neither wine nor strong drink*, or rather, neither old wine nor new; for most think the word here translated *strong drink* signifies some sort of wine; perhaps those that we call made wines, or any thing that is intoxicating. He shall be as Samson was by the divine precept, *Judg. xiii. 7.* and Samuel by his mother's vow, *1 Sam. i. 11.* a Nazarite for life. It is spoke of as a great instance of God's favour to his people, that he *raised up of their sons for prophets*, and their young men for Nazarites. *Amos ii. 11.* as if those that were designed for prophets were trained up under the discipline of the Nazarites; Samuel and John Baptist were; which intimates that those that would be eminent servants of God, and employed in eminent services, must learn to live a life of self-denial and mortification, must be dead to the pleasures of sense, and keep their minds from every thing that is darkening and disturbing to them.

3. He shall be abundantly fitted and qualified for those great and eminent services to which in due time he shall be called. *He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb*, and as soon as it is possible he shall appear to have been so. Observe. (1.) Those that would be filled with Holy Ghost must be sober and temperate and very moderate in the use of wine and strong drink; for that is it that fits him for this: *Be not drunk with wine*, but be filled with the Spirit, with which that is not consistent, *Eph. v. 18.* (2.) It is possible that infants may be wrought upon by the Holy Ghost, even from their mother's womb, for John Baptist even then was filled with the Holy Ghost, who took possession of his heart betimes; and an early specimen was given of it when he *leaped in his mother's womb for joy*, at the approach of the Saviour; and afterwards it appeared very early that he was *sanctified*. God has promised to *pour out his Spirit upon the seed of believers*, *Isa. xlv. 3.* and their *springing up* in a dedication of themselves betimes to God is the fruit of it, *ver. 4, 5.* Who then can forbid water that they should not be baptized, who for ought we know (and we can say no more of the adult, witness Simon Magus) have received the Holy Ghost as well as we, and have the *seeds of grace* sown in their hearts, *Acts x. 47.*

4. He shall be instrumental for the conversion of many souls to God, and the preparing of them to receive and entertain the gospel of Christ, *ver. 16, 17.*

1. He shall be sent to the children of Israel, to the nation of the Jews, to whom the Messiah also was first sent, and not to the Gentiles; to the whole nation and not to the family of the priest only, with which, though he was himself of that family, we do not find he had any particular intimacy nor influence upon them.

2. He shall go before the Lord their God, i. e. before the Messiah, whom they must expect to be not their king, in the sense wherein they commonly take it, a temporal prince to their nation, but their Lord and their God, to rule and defend, and serve them in a spiritual way by his influence on their hearts. Thomas knew this when he said to Christ, *My Lord and my God*, better than Nathanael did when he said, *Rabbi, Thou art the king of Israel*. John shall go before him, a little before him, to give notice of his approach, and to prepare people to receive him.

3. He shall go in the spirit and power of Elias. That is, (1.) He shall be such a man as Elias was, and do such work as Elias did; shall, like him wear a hairy garment and leathern girdle, and live retired from the world; shall, like him, preach the necessity of repentance and reformation to a very corrupt and degenerate age; shall like him, be bold and zealous in reproofing sin, and witnessing against it even in the greatest; and be hated and persecuted for it by Herod and his Herodias, as Elijah was by an Ahab and his Jezebel. He shall be carried on in his work as Elijah was, by a divine spirit and power which shall crown his ministry with wonderful success. As Elias went before the writing-prophets of the Old Testament, and did as it were usher in that signal period of the Old Testament dispensation by a little writing of his own, *2 Chron. xxi. 12.* So John Baptist went before Christ and his apostles, and introduced the gospel dispensation by preaching the substance of the gospel doctrine and duty, *Repent, with an eye to the kingdom of heaven.* (2.) He shall be that very person who was prophesied of by Malachi under the name of Elijah, *Mal. iv. 5.* who should be sent before the coming of the day of the Lord. Behold! I send you a prophet even Elias, not Elias the Tishbite as the LXX. have corruptly read it, to favour the Jews traditions, but a prophet in the spirit and power of Elias, as the angel here expounds it.

4. He shall turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, i. e. shall incline their hearts to receive the Messiah and bid him welcome, by awakening them to a sense of sin and a desire of righteousness. Whatever has a tendency to turn us from iniquity, as John's preaching and baptism had, will turn us to Christ as our Lord and our God: For those who through grace are wrought upon to shake off the yoke of sin, that is, the dominion of the world and the flesh, will soon be persuaded to take upon them the yoke of the Lord Jesus.

5. Hereby he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, i. e. of the Jews to the Gentiles; shall help to conquer the rooted prejudices which the Jews have against the Gentiles, which was done by the gospel as far as it prevailed; and was begun to be done by John Baptist, who came for a witness that all through him might believe, who baptized and taught Roman soldiers as well as Jewish Pharisees, and who cured the pride and confidence of those Jews, who gloried in their having Abraham to their father; and told them that God would *out of stones raise up children unto Abraham*, *Matt. iii. 9.* which would tend to cure their enmity to the Gentiles. Dr. Lightfoot observes, That it is the constant usage of the prophets to speak of the church of the Gentiles as children to the Jewish church, *Isa. liv. 5, 6* — *13.* — *ix. 4—9.* — *xlii. 5.* — *lxvi. 12.* When the Jews that embraced the faith of Christ were brought to join in communion with the Gentiles that did so too, then the heart of the fathers were turned to the children. And he shall turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, i. e. he shall introduce the gospel by which the Gentiles that are now disobedient shall be turned, not so much to their fathers the Jews, but to the faith of Christ; here called the wisdom of the just, in communion with the believing Jews; or thus, he shall turn the hearts of the fathers with the children, i. e. of old and young; shall be instrumental to bring some of every age to be religious, to work a great reformation in the Jewish nation, to bring them off from a ritual traditional religion which they had rested in, and to bring them up to a substantial serious godliness: And the effect of this will be, that enmities will be slain and discord made to cease; and they that are at variance being united in his baptism will be better reconciled one to another. And this agrees with the account Josephus gives of John Baptist, *Antiq. lib. 18. cap. 7.* "That he was a good man and taught the Jews the exercise of virtue, in piety towards God, and righteousness towards one another, and that they should

"convene and knit together in baptism." And he saith, "The people" "flocked after him and were exceedingly delighted in his doctrine." Thus he turned the hearts of fathers and children to God and one another, by turning the disobedient to the wisdom of the just. Observe, (1.) True religion is the wisdom of just men, in distinction from the wisdom of this world: It is both our wisdom, and our duty to be religious, there is both equity and prudence in it. (2.) It is not impossible but that those who have been unbelieving and disobedient may be turned to the wisdom of the just; divine grace can conquer the greatest ignorance and prejudices. (3.) The great design of the gospel is to bring people home to God, and to bring them nearer to one another; and on this errand John Baptist is sent. And in the mention that is twice made of his turning people, there seems to be an allusion to the name of the Tishbite, which is given to Elijah, which some think doth denote the country or city he was of, but has an appellative signification, and therefore they render it Elijah the converter; one that was much employed and very successful in conversion work: The Elias of the New Testament is therefore said to turn or convert many to the Lord their God.

6. Hereby he shall make ready a people prepared for the Lord; shall dispose the minds of people to receive the doctrine of Christ, that thereby they may be prepared for the comforts of his coming. Note, 1. All that are to be devoted to the Lord and made happy in him, must first be prepared and made ready for him. We must be prepared by grace in this world for glory in the other; by the terrors of the law, for the comforts of the gospel; by the spirit of bondage, for the spirit of adoption. 2. Nothing has a more direct tendency to prepare people for Christ, than the doctrine of repentance received and submitted to: When sin is thereby made grievous, Christ will become very precious.

Fourthly, Zacharias's unbelief of the angel's prediction, and the rebuke he was laid under for that unbelief. He heard all that the angel had to say, and should have bowed his head and worshipped the Lord saying, *Be it unto thy servant according to thy word* which thou hast spoken, but it was not so. We are here told,

1. What his unbelief spoke, *ver. 18.* He said to the angel, *Whereby shall I know this?* This was not a humble petition for the confirming of his faith, but a peevish objection against what was said to him as altogether incredible; as if he should say, I can never be made to believe this. He could not but perceive that it was an angel that spake to him, the message delivered having reference to the Old Testament prophecies, carried much of its own evidence along with it. There are many instances in the Old Testament of those that had children when they were old, yet he cannot believe he shall have this child of promise, *For I am an old man*, and my wife hath not only been all her days barren but is now well stricken in years, and not likely ever to have children; therefore he must have a sign given him or he will not believe. Though the appearance of an angel which had been long refused in the church was sign enough: though he had this notice given him in the temple, the place of God's oracles, where he had reason to think no evil angel will be permitted to come; though it was given him when he was praying and burning incense; and though a firm belief of that great principle of religion that God has an almighty power, and with him, nothing is impossible, which we ought not only to know but to teach others was enough to silence all objections; yet considering his own body and his wife's too much, unlike a son of Abraham he staggered at the promise, *Rom. iv. 19, 20.*

2. How his unbelief was silenced, and he silenced for it.

1. The angel stops his mouth by asserting his authority; doth he ask, *Whereby shall I know this?* Let him know it by this, *I am Gabriel*, *ver. 19.* He puts his name to his prophecy, doth as it were sign it with his own hand, *teste meipso*: take my word for it. Angels have sometimes refused to tell their names, as to Manoa and his wife; but this angel readily saith, *I am, Gabriel* which signifies the power of God; or, the mighty one of God, intimating, that the God who bid him say this was able to make it good. He also makes himself known by this name, to put him in mind of the notices of the Messiah's coming sent to Daniel by the man Gabriel, *Dan. viii. 16.* — *ix. 21.* *I am the same* that was sent them, and am sent now in pursuance of the same intention. He is Gabriel that stands in the presence of God, an immediate attendant upon the throne of God. The prime ministers of state in the Persian court are described by this, that they saw the king's face, *Ester i. 14.* Though I am now talking with thee here, yet I stand in the presence of God: I know his eye is upon me, and I dare not say any more than I have warrant to say. But I declare I am sent to speak to thee, sent on purpose to shew thee these glad tidings, which being so well worthy of all acceptance, thou oughtest to have received cheerfully.

2. The angel stops his mouth indeed, by exerting his power, that thou mayest object no more, *Behold, thou shalt be dumb*, *ver. 2.* If thou wilt have a sign for the support of thy faith, it shall be such a one as shall be also the punishment of thine unbelief, thou shalt not be able to speak till the day that these things shall be performed, *ver. 20.* Thou shalt be both dumb and deaf, the same word signifies both; and it is plain he lost his hearing as well as his speech, for his friends made signs to him, *ver. 22.* as well as he to them, *ver. 26.* Now in striking him dumb, (1.) God dealt justly with him, because he had objected against God's word: and from hence we may take occasion to admire the patience of God and his forbearance towards us, that we, who have so often spoke to his dishonour, yet have not been struck dumb as Zacharias was, as we had been if God had dealt with us according to our sins. (2.) God dealt very kindly with him, and very tenderly and graciously. For, (1.) Thus he prevented his speaking any more such distrustful unbelieving words. If he have thought evil, and will not himself lay his hands upon his mouth, nor keep it as with a bridle, God will: It is better not to speak at all than to speak wickedly. (2.) Thus he confirmed his faith; and by his being disabled to speak, he is enabled to think the better: if by the rebukes we are under for our sin we be brought to give more credit to the word of God we have no reason to complain of them. (3.) Thus he was kept from divulging the vision and boasting of it, which otherwise he would have been apt to do, whereas it was designed for the present to be lodged as a secret with him. (4.) It was a great mercy that God's words should be fulfilled in their season notwithstanding his sinful distrust. The unbelief of man shall not make the promises of God of none effect, they shall be fulfilled in their season, and he shall not be for ever dumb, but only till the day that these things shall be performed, and then thy lips shall be opened, that thy mouth may shew forth God's praise. Thus, though God chasten the iniquity of his people with the rod, yet his loving kindness he will not take away.

Fifthly, The return of Zacharias to the people, and at length to his family, and the conception of this child of promise, the son of his old age.

1. The people said expecting Zacharias to come out of the temple, because he was to pronounce the blessing upon them in the name of the Lord; and though he stayed beyond the usual time, yet they did not, as is too common in Christian congregations, hurry away without the blessing, but waited for him, marvelling that he tarried so long in the temple, and afraid lest something was amiss, *ver. 22.*

2. When he came out he was speechless, *ver. 22.* He was now to have dismissed the congregation with a blessing, but is dumb and not able to do it; that the people may be minded to expect the Messiah who can command the

the blessing, who blesteth indeed, and in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed, Aaron's priesthood is now shortly to be silenced and set aside, to make way for the bringing in of a better hope.

4. He made a shift to give them to understand that he had seen a vision, by some awful signs he made, for he *beckoned to them, and remained speechless*, ver. 22. This represents to us the weakness and deficiency of the Levitical priesthood, in comparison with Christ's priesthood and the dispensation of the gospel. The Old Testament speaks by signs, gives us some intimations of divine and heavenly things, but imperfect and uncertain; it *beckons to us but remains speechless*; it is the gospel that speaks to us articulately, and gives us a clear view of that which in the Old Testament was seen through a glass darkly.

4. He stayed out the days of his ministration; for his lot being to burn incense, he could do that, though he was dumb and deaf. When we cannot perform the service of God so well as we would, yet if we perform it so well as we can God will accept of us in it.

5. He then returned to his family, and his wife conceived, ver. 23, 24. She conceived by virtue of the promise, and being sensible of it, she hid herself five months; she kept house and kept it private, and did not go abroad so much as she used to do; (1.) Lest she should do herself any prejudice, so as might occasion her miscarrying or any hurt to the conception. (2.) Lest she should contract any ceremonial pollution which might intrench upon the Nazaritish of her child, remembering the command given to Samson's mother in a like case; and applying it to herself, she must not touch any unclean thing while she is with child of a Nazarite, *Judg. xii. 14*. And though five months are mentioned, because of what follows in the sixth month, yet we may suppose she did in like manner take care of herself during the whole time of her being with child. (3.) Some think it was an excess of modesty that she hid herself, ashamed that it should be said that one of her age should be with child: *Shall she have pleasure being old, her lord being old also?* Gen. xviii. 12. Or, it was in token of her humility, that she might not seem to boast of the honour God had put upon her. (4.) She hid herself for devotion, that she might spend her time in prayer and praise. The saints are God's hidden ones; she gives this reason for her retirement, for thus hath the Lord dealt with me; not only thus graciously in giving me a child, but thus honourably in giving me such a child as is to be a Nazarite, for so her husband might by writing signify to her. He hath taken away my reproach among men. Fruitfulness was looked upon to be so great a blessing among the Jews, because of the promise of the increase of their nation, and the rising of the Messiah among them, that it was a great reproach to be barren; and those who were so, though never so blameless, yet were concluded to be guilty of some great sin unknown, for which they were so punished: Now Elizabeth triumphs, that not only this reproach is taken away but great glory is put upon her instead of it; Thus hath the Lord dealt with me, beyond any thought or expectation of mine in the days wherein he looked on me. Note, In God's gracious dealings with us we ought to observe his gracious regards to us. He has looked on us with compassion and favour, and therefore hath thus dealt with us.

26. And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God, unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth. 27. To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the LORD is with thee: blessed art thou among women. 29. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. 30. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: For thou hast found favour with God. 31. And behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. 32. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the LORD God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. 33. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. 34. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? 35. And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. 36. And behold, thy cousin, Elizabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. 37. For with God nothing shall be impossible. 38. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the LORD, be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

We have here notice given us of all it was fit we should know concerning the incarnation and conception of our blessed Saviour, six months after the conception of John. The same angel Gabriel, that was employed in making known to Zacharias God's purpose concerning his son is employed in this also; for in this the same glorious work of redemption, which was begun in that, is carried on. As bad angels are none of the redeemed, so good angels are none of the redeemers, yet they are employed by the redeemer as his messengers, and they go cheerfully on his errands, because they are his Father's humble servants, and his children's hearty friends and well-wishers.

First, We have here an account given of the mother of our Lord, of whom he was to be born, whom though we are not pray to yet we ought to praise God for.

1. Her name was Mary, the same name with Miriam the sister of Moses and Aaron; the name signifies exalted, and a great elevation it was to her indeed to be thus favoured above all the daughters of the house of David.

2. She was a daughter of the royal family, lineally descended from David, and she herself and all her friends knew it, for she went under the title and character of the house of David, though she was poor and low in the world; and she was enabled by God's providence, and the care of the Jews to preserve their genealogies, to make it out; and as long as the promise of the Messiah was to be fulfilled it was worth keeping; but for those now, who are brought low in the world, to have descended from persons of honour is not worth mentioning.

2. She was a virgin, a pure unspotted one, but espoused to one of the same royal stock, but like her of low estate; so that upon both accounts there was (as it is fit there should be) an equality between them; his name Joseph, he also was of the house of David, Matt. i. 20. Christ's mother was a virgin because he was not to be born by ordinary generation but miraculously; it was necessary he should be so, that though he must partake of the nature of man, yet not of the corruption of that nature; but he was born of a virgin espoused, made up to be married and contracted, to put honour upon the married state, that that might not be brought into contempt (which was an ordinance in innocency) by the Redeemer's being born of a virgin.

4. She lived in Nazareth a city of Galilee, a remote corner of the country, and in no reputation for religion or learning, but it bordered upon the heathen, and therefore was called, *Galilee of the Gentiles*; Christ's having his relations resident there intimates favour in reserve for the Gentile world. And Dr. Lightfoot observes, that Jonah was by birth a Galilean, and Elijah and Elisha very much conversant in Galilee, who were all famous prophets of the Gentiles. The angel was sent to her from Nazareth. Note, No distance or disadvantage of place shall be a prejudice to those whom God has favours in store for. The angel Gabriel carries his message as cheerfully to Mary at Nazareth in Galilee as to Zacharias in the temple at Jerusalem.

Secondly, the address of the angel to her, ver. 28. We are not told what she was doing or how employed when the angel came unto her; but he surprised her with his salutation, *Hail, thou art highly favoured*: this was intended to raise in her, (1.) A value for herself; and though it is very rare that any need to have any sparks struck into their breast with such design, yet in some, who, like Mary, pure only upon their low estate, there is occasion for it. (2.) An expectation of great news not from abroad but from above. Heaven designs, no doubt, uncommon favours for one whom an angel makes court to with such respect. *Hail thou, $\chi\alpha\iota\tau\epsilon$, rejoice thou*, it was the usual form of salutation; it expresseth an esteem of her, and good will to her, and her prosperity.

1. She is dignified: thou art highly favoured: God in his choice of thee to be the mother of the Messiah has put an honour upon thee peculiar to thyself, above that of Eve, who was the mother of all living. The vulgar Latin translates this *gratia plena*, and from thence gathers that she had more of the inherent graces of the Spirit than ever any had, whereas it is certain this speaks no other than the singular favour done her, in preferring her to conceive and bear our blessed Lord; an honour, which since he was to be the seed of the woman, some women must have, not for personal merit, but purely for the sake of free grace, and she is pitched upon; even so, Father, because it seemeth good unto thee.

2. She has the presence of God with her; *The Lord is with thee*, though poor and mean, and perhaps now forecaking how to get a livelihood, and maintain a family in the married state. The angel with this word raised the faith of Gideon, *Judg. vi. 13*. *The Lord is with thee*. Nothing is to be despaired of, not the performance of any service, not the obtaining of any favour, though never so great, if we have God with us. This word might put her in mind of the Immanuel, *God with us*, which a virgin shall conceive and bear, Isa. vii. 14. and why not she?

2. She has the blessing of God upon her; *blessed art thou among women*: not only thou shalt be accounted so by men, but thou shalt be so. Thou that art so highly favoured in this instance mayest expect in other things to be blessed; she explains this herself, ver. 48. *All generations shall call me blessed*; compare it with that which Deborah saith of Jael, another that was the glory of her sex, *Judg. v. 24*. *Blessed shall she be above women in the tent*.

Thirdly, The confirmation she was in upon this address, ver. 29. when she saw him, and the glories with which she was surrounded, she was troubled at the sight of him, and much more at his saying. Had she been a proud ambitious young woman that aimed high, and flattered herself with the expectation of great things in the world, she would have been pleased at his saying, would have been puffed up with it, and (as we have reason to think she was a young woman of very good sense) would have had an answer ready signifying so much: but instead of that she is confounded at it, as not conscious to herself of any thing that either merited or promised such great things: and she cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be: was it from heaven or of men, was it to amuse her, was it to ensnare her, was it to banter her, or was there something substantial and weighty in it? but of all the thoughts she had what manner of salutation it should be, I believe she had not the least idea of its being ever intended or used for a prayer, as it is and has been for many ages by the corrupt degenerate and anti-christian ages of the church, and to be ten times repeated for the Lord's prayer once; so it is in the church of Rome. But her thoughtfulness upon this occasion gives a very useful intimation to young people of her sex, when addresses are made to them to consider and cast in their minds what manner of salutations they are, whence they come, and what their tendency is, that they may receive them accordingly, and may always stand on their guard.

Fourthly, The message itself which the angel had to deliver to her. Some time the angel gives her to pause; but observing that that did but increase her perplexity, he went on with his errand, ver. 30. To what he had said she made no reply, he therefore confirms it. *Fear not, Mary, I have no other design but to assure thee that thou hast found favour with God*, more than thou thinkest of, as there are many who think they are more favoured of God than really they are. Note, Those that have found favour with God should not give way to disquieting distrustful fears. Dost God favour thee? Fear not, though the world frown upon thee. Is he for thee? No matter who is against thee.

1. Though she is a virgin she shall have the honour of being a mother: thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and thou shalt have the naming of him, thou shalt call his name Jesus, ver. 31. It was the sentence upon Eve, that though she should have the honour to be the mother of all living, yet this mortification shall be an allay to that honour, that her desire shall be to her husband, and he shall rule over her, Gen. iii. 16. But Mary has the honour without the allay.

2. Though she lives in poverty and obscurity, yet she shall have the honour to be the mother of the Messiah; her son shall be named Jesus, a Saviour, such a one as the world needs, rather than such a one as the Jews expect.

1. He will be very nearly allied to the upper world: He shall be great, truly great, incontestibly great, for he shall be called the Son of the Highest; the Son of God who is the Highest: of the same nature, as the son is of the same nature with the father; and very dear to him, as the son is to the father. He shall be called, and not mis-called, the Son of the Highest, for he is himself God over all, blessed for evermore, Rom. ix. 5. Note, Those who are the children of God, though but by adoption and regeneration, are truly great, and therefore are concerned to be very good, 1 John iii. 1, 2.

2. He will be very highly preferred in the lower world: for though born under the most disadvantageous circumstances possible, and appearing in the form of a servant, yet the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, ver. 32. He puts her in mind that she was of the house of David: and that therefore since neither the Salique Law, nor the right of primogeniture took place in the entail of his throne, it was not impossible but that she might bring forth an heir to it, and therefore might the more easily believe

there it when she was told by an angel from heaven that she *should* do so; that after the sceptre had been long departed from that ancient and honourable family, it should now at length return to it again to remain in it; not by succession but in the same and to eternity. His people will not give him that throne, will not acknowledge his right to rule them; but the Lord God shall give him a right to rule them, and set him as his king upon the holy hill of Zion. He assures her, (1.) That his kingdom shall be spiritual; he shall reign over the house of Jacob, not Israel according to the flesh, for they neither came into his interests nor did they continue long a people; it must therefore be a spiritual kingdom, the house of Israel according to promise, that he must rule over. (2.) That it shall be eternal: he shall reign for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end, as there had been long since of the temporal reign of David's house; and would shortly be of the state of Israel; other crowns endure not to every generation, but Christ's doth, *Prov. xxvii. 4.* The gospel is the last dispensation, we are to look for no other.

Fifthly, the further information given her upon her enquiry concerning the birth of this prince.

1. It is a just enquiry which she makes, *how shall this be?* ver. 34. how can I now presently conceive a child, (for so the angel meant) when I know not a man; must it therefore be otherwise than by ordinary generation? If so, let me know how? she knew that the Messiah must be born of a virgin, and if she must be his mother she desires to know how. This was not the language of her distrust or any doubt of what the angel said, but of a desire to be farther instructed.

2. It is a satisfactory answer that is given to it, ver. 35. (1.) She shall conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, whose proper work and office it is to sanctify; and therefore to sanctify the virgin for this purpose the Holy Ghost is called the power of the Highest; doth she ask how this shall be? this is enough to help her over all the difficulty there appears in it; a divine power will undertake it, not the power of the angel employed in it, as in other works of wonder, but the power of the Holy Ghost himself.

(2.) She must ask no questions concerning the way and manner how it shall be wrought; for the Holy Ghost, as the power of the Highest, shall overshadow her, as a cloud covered the tabernacle when the glory of God took possession of it to conceal it from those that would too curiously observe the motions of it, and pry into the mystery of it. The formation of every babe in the womb, and the entrance of the spirit of life into it, is a mystery in nature; none knows the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones are formed in the womb of her that is with child, *Ecc. xi. 5.* We were made in secret, *Psal. cxxxix. 15, 16.* Much more was the formation of the child Jesus a mystery; without controversy, great was the mystery of godliness, God manifesteth in the flesh, *1 Tim. iii. 16.* It is a new thing created in the earth, *Jer. xxxi. 22.* concerning which we must not covet to be wise above what is written.

3. The child she shall conceive is a holy thing, and therefore must not be conceived by ordinary generation, because he must not share in the common corruption and pollution of the human nature: he is spoken of emphatically, *That Holy Thing*, such as never was: and he shall be called the Son of God, as the Son of the Father by eternal generation, and as an indication of that he shall now be formed by the Holy Ghost in the present conception. His human nature must so be produced, as it was fit that should be which was to be taken into union with the divine nature.

3. It was a farther encouragement to her faith, to be told that her cousin Elisabeth, though stricken in years, was with child, ver. 36. Here is an age of wonders beginning, and therefore be not surprised: here is one among thy own relations truly great, though not altogether so great as this; it is usual with God to advance in working wonders. Greater works than these shall ye do. Though Elisabeth was on the father's side, of the daughters of Aaron, ver. 5. yet on the mother's side, she might be of the house of David, for those two families often intermarried, as an earnest of the uniting of the royalty and the priesthood in the Messiah. This is the sixth month with her that was called barren: this intimates, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, that all the instances in the Old Testament, of those having children that had been long barren, which was above nature, were designed to prepare the world for the belief of a virgin's bearing a son, which was against nature. And therefore, even in the birth of Isaac, Abraham saw Christ's day, foresaw such a miracle in the birth of Christ; the angel assures Mary of this to encourage her faith, and concludes with that great truth of undoubted certainty and universal use, for with God nothing shall be impossible, ver. 37. and if nothing then not this. Abraham therefore staggered not at the belief of the divine promise, because he was strong in his belief of the divine power, *Rom. iv. 20, 21.* No word of God must be incredible to us, as long as no work of God is impossible to him.

Sixthly, her acquiescence in the will of God concerning her, ver. 38. she owns herself, 1. A believing subject to the divine authority. Behold the handmaid of the Lord; Lord, I am at thy service, at thy dispose, to do what thou commandest me. She objects not the danger of spoiling her marriage and blemishing her reputation, but leaves the issue with God, and submits intirely to his will. 2. A believing expectant of the divine favour. She is not only content it should be so, but humbly desires it may be so, be it unto me according to thy word; such a favour as this it was not for her to slight or be indifferent to; and for what God has promised he will be fought unto; by prayer we must put our amen, or so be it, to the promise. Remember, and perform thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. We must, as Mary here, guide our desires by the word of God, and ground our hopes upon it. Be it unto me according to thy word; just so, and no otherwise.

Hereupon the angel departed from her; having compleated the errand he was sent upon; returned to give account of it, and receive new instructions. Converse with angels was always a transient thing and soon over; it will be constant and permanent in the future state. And it is generally supposed that just at this instant the virgin conceived, by the overshadowing power of the Holy Ghost: but the scripture being decently silent concerning that, it doth not become us to be inquisitive, much less positive.

39. ¶ And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill-country with haste, into a city of Juda; 40. And entered into the house of Zecharias, and saluted Elisabeth. 41. And it came to pass, that when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. 42. And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, 43. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44. For lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. 45. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord. 46. And

Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, 47. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. 48. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. 49. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is his name. 50. And his mercy is on them that fear him, from generation to generation. 51. He hath shewed strength with his arm, he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. 52. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. 53. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away, 54. He hath holden his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy. 55. As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever. 56. And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

We have here an interview between the two happy mothers, Elisabeth and Mary: the angel by intimating to Mary that favour bestowed on her cousin Elisabeth, ver. 36. gave occasion for it; and sometimes it may prove a better piece of service than we think, to bring good people together to compare notes. Here is,

First, the visit which Mary made to Elisabeth; Mary was the younger, and younger with child; and therefore if they must come together it was fittest that Mary should take the journey, not insisting on the preference which the greater dignity of her conception gave her, ver. 39. She arose, and left her affairs, to attend this greater matter: in those days, i. e. at that time, (as it is commonly explained, *Jer. xxxiii. 15.—l. 4.*) in a day or two after the angel had visited her, taking some time first as it is supposed, for her devotion, or rather hastening away to her cousin's, where she would have more leisure, and better help in the family of a priest. She went, *μὴ σπεῦδον*, [with care and diligence, and expedition; not as young people commonly go abroad and visit their friends to divert herself, but to inform herself: she went to a city of Judah in the hill country, it is not named: but by comparing the description of it here with *Joshua xxi. 10, 11.* it appears to be Hebron, for that is there said to be in the hill-country of Judah, and to belong to the priests the sons of Aaron: thither Mary hastened, though it was a long journey, some score of miles.

1. Dr. Lightfoot offers a conjecture, that she was to conceive of our Saviour there at Hebron, and perhaps had so much intimated to her by the angel, or some other way; and therefore she made such haste thither. He thinks it probable that Shiloh of the tribe of Judah, and the seed of David, should be conceived in a city of Judah and of David, as he was to be born in Bethlehem, another city which belonged to them both. In Hebron the promise was given of Isaac, circumcision was instituted: here (saith he) Abraham had his first land, and David his first crown: here lay interred the three couple, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah, and, as antiquity has held, Adam and Eve: he therefore thinks it suits singularly with the harmony and consent which God useth in his works, that the promise should begin to take place by the conception of the Messiah, even among those patriarchs to whom it was given, I see no improbability in the conjecture, but add this for the support of it, that Elisabeth said, ver. 45, *There shall be a performance*; as if it were not performed yet, but was to be performed there.

2. It is generally supposed that she went thither for the confirming of her faith, by the sign which the angel had given her, her cousin's being with child, and to rejoice with her after favourite. And besides, she went thither perhaps that she might be more retired from company, or else might have more agreeable company than she could have in Nazareth. We may suppose that she did not acquaint any of her neighbours at Nazareth with the message she had received from heaven, yet longed to talk over a thing she had a thousand times thought over, and knew no person in the world with whom she could freely converse concerning it but her cousin Elisabeth, and therefore she hastened to her. Note, It is very beneficial and comfortable for those that have a good work of grace begun in their souls, and Christ in the forming there, to consult those who are in the same case, that they may communicate experiences one to another; and they will find that as in water, face answers to face, so doth the heart of man to man, or Christian to Christian.

Secondly, The meeting between Mary and Elisabeth; Mary entered into the house of Zacharias, but he being dumb and deaf, it is likely he kept his chamber and saw no company, and therefore she saluted Elisabeth, ver. 40. told her she was come to make her a visit, to know her state, and rejoice with her in her joy.

Now at their first coming together for the confirmation of the faith of both of them there was something very extraordinary: Mary knew that Elisabeth was with child, but it doth not appear that Elisabeth had been told any thing of her cousin Mary's being designed for the mother of the Messiah; and therefore what knowledge she appears to have had of it must come by a revelation, which would be a great encouragement to Mary.

1. The babe leaped in her womb. It is very probable she had been several weeks quick, for she was six months gone, and that she had often felt the child stir; but this was a more than ordinary motion of the child, and which alarmed her to expect something very extraordinary, *ἐκίνησε*. It is the same word that is used by the LXX. *Gen. xxv. 22.* for the struggling of Jacob and Esau in Rebecca's womb, and the mountains skipping, *Palm. cxiv. 4.* The babe leaped as it were to give a signal to his mother that he was now at hand, whose forerunner he was to be, about six months in ministry, as he was in being: or, it was the effect of some strong impression made upon the mother. Now began to be fulfilled what the angel said to his father, ver. 15. that he should be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb; and perhaps he himself had some reference to this, when he said, *John iii. 29.* The friend of the bridegroom rejoiceth greatly, because of the bridegroom's voice heard, though not by him yet by his mother.

2. Elisabeth was herself filled with the Holy Ghost, or a spirit of prophecy; by which, as well as by the particular suggestions of the Holy Ghost she was filled with, she was given to understand that the Messiah was at hand, in whom prophecy should revive, and by whom the Holy Ghost should be more plentifully poured out than ever, according to the expectations of those who waited for the consolation of Israel. The uncommon motion of the babe in her womb was a token of the extraordinary emotion of her spirit under a divine impulse. Note, Those whom Christ graciously visits may know it by their being filled with the Holy Ghost; for if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Thirdly, The welcome which Elisabeth, by the Spirit of prophecy, gave to Mary the mother of our Lord; not as to a common friend making a common visit, but as to one of whom the Messiah was to be born.

1. She *congratulates* her honour, and though perhaps she knew not of it till just now, she acknowledgeth it with the greatest assurance and satisfaction. She *spoke with a loud voice*, which doth not at all intimate (as some think) that there was a floor or wall between them; but that she was in a transport or exultation of joy, and said what she cared not who knew: and this she said, *Blessed art thou among women*, the same word that the angel had said, *ver. 28.* for thus this will of God, concerning honouring the Son, should be done *on earth* as it is done *in heaven*. But Elizabeth adds a reason, therefore *Blessed art thou*, because *blessed is the fruit of thy womb*; thence it was that she derived this excellent dignity. Elizabeth was the wife of a priest, and in years, yet she *grudgeth* not that her kinswoman, who was many years younger than she, and every way her inferior, should have the honour of conceiving in her virginity, and being the mother of the Messiah; whereas the honour put upon her was much less; but rejoiceth in it, and is well pleased, as her son was afterwards, that she that cometh after her is preferred before her, *John i. 27.* Note, While we cannot but own that we are more favoured of God than we deserve, let us by no means envy others that are more highly favoured than we are.

2. She *acknowledgeth* her condescension in making her this visit, *ver. 43.* *Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?* Observe, (1.) She calls the virgin Mary the *mother of her Lord*, for David in spirit called the Messiah *Lord*, his *Lord*, for she knew he was to be *Lord of all*. (2.) She not only bids her welcome to her house, though perhaps she came but in mean circumstances, but reckons this visit a great favour, which she thought herself unworthy of. *Whence is this to me?* It is in reality, and not in compliment, that she saith, this was a greater favour than she could have expected. Note, Those that are filled with the Holy Ghost have low thoughts of their own merits, and high thoughts of God's favours. Her son the Baptist spoke to the same purpose with this, when he said, *Comest thou to me?* *Matt. iii. 14.*

3. She acquaints her with the concurrence of the babe in her womb in this welcome to her, *ver. 44.* Thou certainly bringest some extraordinary tidings, some extraordinary blessing with thee, for *as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears*, not only my heart leaped for joy, though I knew not immediately why or wherefore, but the *babe in my womb*, who was not capable of knowing it, *did so too*. He leaped as if it were for joy that the Messiah, whose harbinger he was to be, would himself come so soon after him. This would serve very much to strengthen the faith of the virgin, that there were such assurances as these given to others; and it would be in part the accomplishment of what had been so often foretold, that there should be an *universal joy before the Lord when he cometh*, *Psal. xlviii. 8, 9.*

4. She commends her faith and encourageth it, *ver. 45.* *Blessed is she that believed*; believing souls are blessed souls, and will be found so at last; this blessedness cometh *through faith*, even the blessedness of being related to Christ, and having him *formed in the soul*. They are blessed who believe the word of God, for that word will not fail them; there shall, without doubt, be a performance of those things which are told her from the Lord. Note, The inviolable certainty of the promise is the undoubted felicity of those that build upon it and expect their all from it. The faithfulness of God is the blessedness of the faith of the saints. Those that have experienced the performance of God's promises, themselves should encourage others to hope that he will be as good as his word to them also; *I will tell you what God has done for my soul*.

Fourthly, Mary's song of praise upon this occasion. Elizabeth's prophecy was an echo to the virgin Mary's salutation, and this song is yet a stronger echo to that prophecy, and shews her to be no less filled with the Holy Ghost than Elizabeth was. We may suppose the blessed virgin to come in very much fatigued with her journey, yet she forgets that, and is inspired with new life and vigour and joy upon the confirmation she here meets with of her faith; and since, by this sudden inspiration and transport she finds that this was designed to be her errand hither, as weary as she is, like Abraham's servant, she would *neither eat nor drink till she had told her errand*.

1. Here are the expressions of joy and praise, and God alone the object of the praise and center of the joy. Some compare this song with that which her name-sake Miriam, the sister of Moses, sung upon the triumphant departure of Israel out of Egypt, and their triumphant passage through the Red-sea; others think it better compared with the song of Hannah upon the birth of Samuel, which, like this, passeth from a family mercy to a public and general one. This begins like that, *My heart rejoiceth in the Lord*, *1 Sam. ii. 1.* Observe how Mary here speaks of God.

1. With great reverence to him, as *the Lord*. *My soul doth magnify the Lord*; I never saw him so great as now I find him so good. Note, Those and those only, are advanced in mercy, who are thereby brought to think the more highly and honourably of God; whereas there are those whose prosperity and preferment makes them say, *What is the Almighty that we should serve him?* The more honour God has any way put upon us, the more honour we must study to give to him: And then only are we accepted in magnifying the Lord, when our souls magnify him, and *all that is within us*. Praising-work must be soul-work.

2. With great complacency in him as *her Saviour*. *My spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour*. This seems to have reference to the Messiah, whom she was to be the mother of; she calls him *God her Saviour*, for the angel had told her, that he should be the *Son of the Highest*, and that his name should be Jesus, a Saviour; this she fastened upon with application to herself; he is *God my Saviour*. Even the mother of our Lord had need of an interest in him as her Saviour, and would have been undone without it. And she glories more in that happiness which she had in common with all believers than in being his mother, which was an honour peculiar to herself: and this agrees with the preference Christ gave to obedient believers above his mother and brethren, see *Matt. xii. 50. Luke xi. 27, 28.* Note, Those that have Christ for their God and Saviour have a great deal of reason to rejoice, to rejoice in spirit, that is rejoicing as Christ did, *Luke x. 21.* with spiritual joy.

2. Here are just causes assigned for this joy and praise. 1. Upon *her own account*, *ver. 48, 49.* (1.) *Her spirit rejoiceth in the Lord*, because of the kind things he had done for her; his condescension and compassion to her, *he has regarded the low estate of his hand-maiden*, i. e. he has looked upon her with pity, for so the word is commonly used. He has chosen me to this honour, notwithstanding my great meanness, poverty and obscurity; nay, the expression seems to intimate, not only (to allude to that of Gideon, *Judg. vi. 12.*) that her family was poor in Judah, but she was the *least in her father's house*, as if she were under some particular contempt and disgrace among her relations, was unjustly neglected, and the outcast of the family, and God put this honour upon her, to balance abundantly that contempt. I the rather suggest, this for we find something toward such honour as this put upon others on the like consideration. Because God saw that Leah was hated she opened her womb, *Gen. xxix. 31.* Because Hannah was provoked and made to fret, and insulted ever by Peninnah, therefore God gave her a son, *1 Sam. i. 19.* Whom men wrongfully deprecate and despise, God sometimes, in compassion towards them, especially if they have

borne it patiently, doth prefer and advance; see *Judg. xi. 7.* So in Mary's case. And if God regard her low estate, he not only thereby gives a specimen of his favour to the whole race of mankind, whom he *remembereth in their low estate*, as the psalmist speaks, *Psal. cxxxvi. 23.* but secures a lasting honour to her (for such the honour is that God bestows, honour that fades not away) *from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed*, i. e. shall think me a happy woman and highly advanced. All that embrace Christ and his gospel will say, *Blessed was the womb that bore him, and the paps which he sucked*, *Luke xi. 27.* Elizabeth had once and again called her *blessed*; but that is not all, saith she, all generations of Gentiles as well as Jews shall call me so. (2.) Her soul magnifies the Lord, because of the wonderful things he has done for her, *ver. 49.* *He that is mighty has done to me great things*. A great thing indeed, that a virgin should conceive. A great thing indeed, that Messiah who had been so long ago promised to the church, and so long expected by the church, should now at length be born. It is the power of the Highest that appears in this. She adds, *and holy is his name*; for so Hannah saith in her song, *There is none holy as the Lord*, which she explains in the next words, *for there is none beside thee*, *1 Sam. ii. 2.* God is a being by himself, and he manifests himself to be so, especially in the work of our redemption. He that is mighty, even he whose name is holy, has done to me great things. Glorious things may be expected from him that is both mighty and holy; who can do every thing, and will do every thing well and for the best.

2. Upon the account of others. The virgin Mary, as the mother of the Messiah, is become a kind of public person, wears a public character, and is therefore presently endued with another spirit, a more public spirit than before she had, and therefore looks abroad, looks about her, looks before her, and takes notice of God's various dealings with the children of men, *ver. 50.* &c. as Hannah, *1 Sam. ii. 3.* and in this she has especially an eye to the coming of the Redeemer, and God's manifesting himself therein.

1. It is a certain truth, that *God has mercy in store*, mercy in reserve, for all that have a reverence for his Majesty, and a due regard to his sovereignty and authority: But never did this appear so, as in sending his Son into the world to save us, *ver. 50.* His mercy is on them that fear him; it has always been so; he has ever looked upon them with an eye of peculiar favour, who have looked up to him with an eye of filial fear. But he hath manifested this mercy, so as never before, in sending his Son to bring in an everlasting righteousness, and work out an everlasting salvation for them that fear him; and this from generation to generation, for there are gospel-privileges transmitted by entail and intended for perpetuity. Those that fear God, as their Creator and Judge, are encouraged to hope for mercy in him, though their Mediator and Advocate; and in him mercy is seated upon all that fear God, pardoning mercy, healing mercy, accepting mercy, crowning mercy, from generation to generation, while the world stands. In Christ he keepeth mercy for thousands.

2. It has been a common observation, that God in his providence doth put contempt upon the haughty, and honour upon the humble, and this he has done remarkably in the whole economy of the work of man's redemption. As God had with his mercy to her shewed himself mighty also, *ver. 48, 49.* so he had with his mercy on them that fear him, shewed strength likewise with his arm. (1.) In the course of his providence it is his usual method to cross the expectations of men, and proceed quite otherwise, than they promise themselves. Proud men expect to carry all before them, to have their way and have their will, but he scatters them in the imagination of their hearts; breaks their measures, blasts their projects, nay, and brings them low, and brings them down by those very counsels with which they thought to advance and establish themselves. The mighty think to secure themselves by might in their seats, but he puts them down, and overturns their seats; while, on the other hand, those of low degree, who despaired of ever advancing themselves, and thought of no other but of being ever low, are wonderfully exalted. And this observation concerning honour holds likewise concerning riches; many that were so poor that they had not bread for themselves and their families, by some surprising turn of providence in favour of them, come to be filled with good things; while, on the other hand, those that were rich, and thought no other but that to-morrow should be as this day, that their mountain stood strong, and should never be moved, are strangely impoverished and sent away empty. Now this is the same observation that Hannah had made and enlarged upon in her song, with application to the case of herself and her adversary; *1 Sam. ii. 4, 5, 6, 7.* which very much illustrates this here. And compare also *Psal. cxvii. 33-41.* and *Psal. cxlii. 7, 8, 9.* and *Ecc. ix. 11.* God takes a pleasure in disappointing their expectations that promise themselves great things in the world, and in out-doing the expectations of those that promise themselves but a little, as a righteous God it is his glory to abase those that exalt themselves, and strike terror on the secure; and as a good God it is his glory to exalt those that humble themselves, and to speak comfort to those that fear before him. (2.) This doth especially appear in the methods of gospel-grace.

(1.) In the spiritual honours it dispenseth. When the proud Pharisees were rejected, and publicans and sinners went into the kingdom of heaven before them; when the Jews that followed after the law of righteousness did not attain it, and the Gentiles that never thought of it attained to righteousness, *Rom. ix. 30, 31.* When God chose not the wise men after the flesh, not the mighty or the noble to preach the gospel and plant Christianity in the world, but the foolish and weak things of the world, and things that were despised, *1 Cor. i. 26, 27.* then he scattered the proud and put down the mighty, but exalted them of low degree. When the tyranny of the chief priests and elders was brought down, who had long lorded it over God's heritage, and hoped always to do so; and Christ's disciples, a company of poor despised fishermen, by the power they were clothed with, were made to sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel; when the power of the four monarchies was broken, and the kingdom of the Messiah, that stone cut out of the mountain without hands, is made to fill the earth; then are the proud scattered, and those of low degree exalted.

(2.) In the spiritual riches it dispenseth, *ver. 53.* (1.) Those that see their need of Christ, and are importunately desirous of righteousness and life in him, he fills those with good things, with the best things, he gives liberally to them, and they are abundantly satisfied with the blessings he gives. They that are weary and heavy laden shall find rest with Christ, and those that thirst are called to come to him and drink; for they only know how to value his gifts; to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet, manna is angels' food, and to the thirsty fair water is honey out of the rock. (2.) Those who are rich, who are not hungry, who, like Laodicea, think they have need of nothing, are full of themselves and their own righteousness, and think they have a sufficiency in themselves, those he sends away from his door, they are not welcome to him, he sends them empty away, they come full of self, and are sent away empty of Christ. He sends them to the gods whom they served, to their own righteousness and strength which they trusted to.

3. It was always expected that the Messiah should be, in a special manner the strength and glory of his people Israel, and so he is in a peculiar manner, *ver. 54.* *he hath holpen his servant Israel*, *אַיְלָאֵלֵינוּ*. He hath taken them by the hand, and helped them up that were fallen, and could not help themselves

themselves. Those that were sunk under the burdens of a broken covenant of innocence are *helped up* by the blessings of a renewed covenant of grace. The sending of the Messiah, on whom *help* was laid for poor sinners, was the greatest kindness that could be done, the greatest help that could be provided for his people Israel; and that which magnifies it is,

1. That it is *in remembrance of his mercy*; the mercifulness of his nature, the mercy he has in store for his servant Israel. While this blessing was deferred, his people, who waited for it, were often ready to ask, *Has God forgotten to be gracious?* But now he made it appear that he had not forgotten, but *remembered his mercy*. He remembered his former mercy and repeated that to them in *spiritual* blessings, which he had done formerly to them in *temporal* favours. *He remembered the days of old, where is he that brought them out of the sea; out of Egypt? Isa. lxiii. 11.* and therefore he will do the like again? which that was a type of.

2. That it is *in performance of his promise*; it is a mercy not only designed but declared, *ver. 55.* it was *what he spake to our fathers*, that the seed of the woman shall break the head of the serpent; that God should dwell in the tents of Shem: and particularly to Abraham, that *in his seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed*, with the best of blessings, with the blessings that are for ever, and to the seed that shall be for ever; that is, his *spiritual* seed, for his carnal seed were *cut off* a little after this. Note, What God hath spoken he will perform; what he hath spoken to the fathers will be performed to their seed; to their seed's seed, in blessings that shall last for ever.

Lastly, Mary's return to Nazareth, *ver. 56.* after she had continued with Elisabeth about *three months*, so long as to be fully satisfied concerning herself, that she was *with child*, and to be confirmed therein by her cousin Elisabeth. Some think, though her return is here mentioned, before Elisabeth's being delivered, because the Evangelist would finish this passage concerning Mary, before he proceeded with the story of Elisabeth, yet that Mary stayed till her cousin was (as we say) *down and up again*, that she might attend on her, and be with her in her lying-in, and have her own faith confirmed by the full accomplishment of the promise of God concerning Elisabeth. But most bind themselves to the order of the story as it lies, and think she returned again when Elisabeth was near her time; because she still affected retirement, and therefore would not be there, when the birth of this child of promise would draw a great deal of company to the house. Those in whose hearts Christ is formed, take more delight than they used to do in *sitting alone and keeping silence*.

57. Now Elisabeth's full time came, that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. 58. And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the LORD had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her. 59. And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. 60. And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. 61. And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. 62. And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. 63. And he asked for a writing-table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. 64. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God. 65. And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill-country of Judea. 66. And all they that had heard them, laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be? And the hand of the LORD was with him.

In these verses we have,

1. The birth of John Baptist, *ver. 57.* Though he was conceived in the womb by a miracle, he continued in the womb according to the ordinary course of nature. So did our Saviour. *Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered*, and then she brought forth a son. Promised mercies are to be expected when the full time for them is come, and not before.

2. The great joy that was among all the relations of the family, upon this extraordinary occasion, *ver. 58.* *Her neighbours and her cousins heard of it*, for it would be in every body's mouth, as next to miraculous: Dr. Lightfoot observes, that Hebron was inhabited by priests of the family of Aaron, and those were the cousins here spoken of; but the fields and villages about by the children of Judah, and those were the neighbours. Now these here discovered, (1.) A pious regard to God; they acknowledge that the Lord had magnified his mercy to her, so the word is: It was a mercy to have her reproach taken away, a mercy to have her family built up and the more being a family of priests, devoted to God and employed for him. Many things concurred to make the mercy great, that she had been long barren, was now old, but especially that the child should be great in the sight of the Lord. (2.) A friendly regard to Elisabeth; when she rejoiced, they rejoiced with her. We ought to take pleasure in the prosperity of our neighbours and friends, and to be thankful to God for their comforts as for our own.

3. The dispute that was among them concerning the naming him, *ver. 59.* On the eighth day, as God had appointed, they came together to circumcise the child, and it was here in Hebron that circumcision was first instituted, and Isaac, who like John Baptist was born by promise, was one of the first that was submitted to it, at least the chief eyed in the institution of it. They that rejoiced in the birth of the child, came together to the circumcising of him. Note, The greatest comfort we can take in our children is in giving them up to God, and recognising their covenant relation to him. The baptism of our children should be more our joy than their birth.

Now it was the custom when they circumcised their children to name them: because when Abram was circumcised, God gave him a new name and called him Abraham; and it is not unfit that they should be left nameless till they are by name given up to God. Now,

1. Some proposed that he should be called by his father's name, Zacharias, of which we have not any instance in scripture, that the child should bear the father's name; but perhaps it was of late come into use among the Jews as it is with us; and they intended hereby to do honour to the father, who was not likely to have another child.

2. The mother opposed it, and would have called him John; having learned either by inspiration of the Holy Ghost (as is most probable), or by information in writing from her husband, that God appointed that should

be his name, *ver. 60.* *He shall be called Johnan, gracious*; because he shall introduce the gospel of Christ, wherein God's grace shines more bright than ever.

3. The relations objected against that, *ver. 61.* *There is none of thy kindred*, none of the relations of thy family that is called by that name, and therefore, if he may not have his father's name, yet let him have the name of some of his kindred, that will take it as a piece of respect to have such a child of wonders as this named from them. Note, As those that have friends must shew themselves friendly, so those that have relations must be obliging to them in all the usual regards that are paid to kindred.

4. Here they appealed to the father, and would try if they could possibly get to know his mind, for it was his office to name the child, *ver. 62.* They made signs to him, by which it appears he was deaf as well as dumb, nay, it should seem, mindless of any thing, else one would think they should at first have desired him to write down his child's name, if he had ever yet communicated any thing by writing since he was struck. However they would carry the matter as far as they could, and give him to understand what the dispute was, which he only could determine; whereupon he made signs to them to give him a table-book such as they then used; and with the pencil he wrote these words, *His name is John*, *ver. 63.* Not it shall be so, or I would have it so, but it is so; the matter is determined already; the angel had given him that name. Observe, When Zacharias could not speak he wrote. When ministers have their mouth stopped, that they cannot preach, yet they may be doing good as long as they have not their hands tied that they cannot write. Many of the martyrs in prison wrote letters to their friends, which were of great use; blessed Paul himself did so. Zacharias's pitching upon the same name that Elisabeth had chosen was a great surprise to the company, they marvelled all; for they knew not, that though by reason of his deafness and dumbness they could not converse together, yet they were both guided by one and the same Spirit: or, perhaps, they marvelled that he wrote so distinctly and intelligently, which (the stroke he was under being somewhat like that of the palsy) he had not done before.

5. He thereupon recovered the use of his speech, *ver. 64.* *His mouth was opened immediately.* The time prefixed for his being silenced was, till the day that these things shall be fulfilled, *ver. 20.* not all the things going before concerning John's ministry, but those which relate to his birth and name, *ver. 13.* and that time was now expired, whereupon the restraint was taken off, and God gave him the opening of the mouth again, as he did to Ezekiel, *chap. iii. 27.* Dr. Lightfoot compares this case of Zacharias with that of Moses, *Exod. iv. 24—26.* Moses for distrust is in danger of his life, as Zacharias for the same fault is struck dumb; but upon the circumcising of his child, and recovery of his faith, there, as here, the danger is removed. Infidelity closed his mouth, and now believing opens it again; he believes, therefore he speaks: David lay under guilt from the conception of his child, till a few days after its birth; then the Lord takes away his sin; upon his repentance he shall not die, so here he shall be no longer dumb; his mouth was opened, and he spake, and praised God. Note, When God opens our lips, our mouths must shew forth his praise: as good be without our speech as not use it in praising God, for then our tongue is most our glory, when it is employed for God's glory.

6. These things were told all the country over, to the great amazement of all that heard them, *ver. 65, 66.* The sentiments of the people are not to be slighted, but taken notice of. We are here told, (1.) That these sayings were discoursed of, and were the common talk all about the hill-country of Judea, and it was pity but a narrative of them had been drawn up and published in the world immediately. (2.) That most people who heard of these things were put into a consternation by them; fear came on all them that dwell round about there. If we have not a good hope, as we ought to have, built upon the gospel, we may expect that the tidings of it will fill us with fear. They believed and trembled, whereas they should have believed and triumphed. (3.) It raised the expectations of people concerning this child, and obliged them to have their eye upon him to see what he would come to. They laid up these presages in their hearts, treasured them up in mind and memory, as foreseeing they should hereafter have occasion to recollect them. Note, What we hear that may be of use to us we should treasure up, that we may be able to bring forth for the benefit of other things new and old; and when things come to perfection may be able to look back upon the presages thereof, and to say it was what he might expect. They said within themselves, and said among themselves, *What manner of child shall this be?* What will be the fruit when these are the buds; or rather when the root is out of such a dry ground? Note, When children are born into the world it is very uncertain what they will prove; yet sometimes there have been early indications of something great, as in the birth of Moses, Samson, Samuel, and here of John. And we have reason to think that there were some of those living at the time when John began his public ministry, who could and did remember these things, and relate them to others, which contributed as much as any thing to the great flocking there was after him.

Lastly, It is said, *the hand of the Lord was with him*, i. e. He was taken under the special protection of the Almighty from his birth, as one designed for something great and considerable, and there were many instances of it. It appeared likewise that the Spirit was at work upon his soul very early: As soon as he began to speak or go, you might perceive something in him very extraordinary. Note, God has ways of operating upon children in their infancy which we cannot account for. God never made a fool but he knew how to sanctify it.

67. And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying. 68. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people, 69. And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us, in the house of his servant David; 70. As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began; 71. That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us. 72. To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant: 73. The oath which he swore to our father Abraham, 74. That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, 75. In holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life; 76. And thou child shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the LORD, to prepare his ways; 77. To give knowledge of salvation

tion unto his people, by the remission of their sins, 78. Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us, 79. To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace: 80. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

We have here the song wherewith Zacharias praised God when his mouth was opened, in it he is said to prophesy, ver. 67. and so he did in the strictest sense of prophesying, for he foretold things to come concerning the kingdom of the Messiah, to which all the prophets bear witness. Observe,

1. How he was qualified for this: He was filled with the Holy Ghost, was endued with more than ordinary measures and degrees of it for this purpose. He was divinely inspired. God not only forgave him his unbelief and distrust, which was signified by discharging of him from the punishment of it, but as a specimen of the abounding of grace towards believers, he filled him with the Holy Ghost, and put this honour upon him to employ him for his honour.

2. What the matter of his song was. Here is nothing said of the private concerns of his own family, the rolling away the reproach from it, and putting of a reputation upon it by the birth of this child, though no doubt he found a time to give thanks to God for this with his family; but in this song he is wholly taken up with the kingdom of the Messiah, and the public blessings to be introduced by it: He could have little pleasure in this fruitfulness of his vine, and the hopefulness of his olive plant, if herein he had not foreseen the good of Jerusalem, peace upon Israel, and blessings on both out of Zion, Psalm cxxi. 3, 5, 6. The Old Testament prophecies are expressed many times in praises and new songs, so is this beginning of New Testament prophecy, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel. The God of the whole earth, shall he be called; yet Zacharias, speaking of the work of redemption, called him the Lord God of Israel, because to Israel the prophecies, promises and types of the redemption had hitherto been given, and to them the first promises and proposals of it were now to be made. Israel, as a chosen people, was a type of the elect of God out of all nations, whom God had a particular eye to in sending the Saviour; and therefore he is therein called the Lord of God Israel.*

Now Zacharias here blesteth God,

1. For the work of salvation that was to be wrought out by the Messiah himself, ver. 68—75. This is it that fills him, when he is filled with the Holy Ghost, and it is that which all that have the Spirit of Christ are full of.

1. In sending the Messiah God has made a gracious visit to his people, whom for many ages he had seemed to neglect, and to be estranged from; he hath visited them as a friend, to take cognizance of their case. God is said to have visited his people in bondage when he delivered them, *Exod. iii. 16—iv. 31.* to have visited his people in famine, when he gave them bread, *Ruth i. 6.* He had often sent to them by his prophets, and had still kept up a correspondence with them, but now he himself made them a visit.

2. He has wrought out a redemption for them; he hath redeemed his people: This was the errand on which Christ came into the world, to redeem those that were sold for sin, and sold under sin; even God's own people, his Israel, his Son, his first-born, his free-born need to be redeemed, and are undone if they be not. Christ redeems them by price out of the hands of God's justice, and redeems them by power out of the hands of Satan's tyranny, as Israel out of Egypt.

3. He has fulfilled the covenant of royalty made with the most famous Old Testament prince, that was David: Glorious things had been said of his family, that on him, as a mighty one, help should be laid, that his horn should be exalted, and his seed perpetuated, *Psalm lxxxix. 19; 20, 24, 29.* But that family had been long in a manner cast off and abhorred, *Psalm lxxxix. 38.* Now here it is gloried in, that according to the promise the horn of David should again be made to bud, for, *Psalm cxxxii. 17.* He hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, ver. 69. there, where it was promised and expected to arise. David is called God's servant, not only as a good man, but as a king that ruled for God: And he was an instrument of the salvation of Israel, by being employed in the government of Israel: so Christ is the author of eternal redemption to those only that obey him. There is in Christ, and in him only salvation for us, and it is a horn of salvation; for, (1.) It is an honourable salvation, it is raised up above all other salvations, none of which are to be compared with it: In it the glory both of the Redeemer and of the redeemed are advanced, and their horn exalted with honour. (2.) It is a plentiful salvation; it is a cornucopia, a horn of plenty, a salvation in which we are blessed with spiritual blessings, in heavenly things abundantly. (3.) It is a powerful salvation; the strength of the beast is in his horn; he has raised up such a salvation as shall pull down our spiritual enemies, and protect us from them. In the chariots of this salvation the Redeemer shall go forth, and go on conquering and to conquer.

4. He hath fulfilled all the precious promises made to the church by the most famous Old Testament prophets, ver. 70. As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets. His doctrine of salvation by the Messiah is confirmed by an appeal to the prophets, and the greatness and importance of that salvation thereby evidenced and magnified: it is the same they spoke of, which therefore ought to be expected and welcome: It is what they inquired and searched diligently after, *1 Pet. i. 10, 11.* and therefore ought not to be slighted or thought meanly of. God is now doing that which he has long ago spoken of, and therefore be silent, O all flesh before him, and attend to him. See (1.) How sacred the prophecies of this salvation were; the prophets who delivered them were holy prophets, who durst not deceive, and who aimed at promoting holiness among men; and it was the holy God, himself that spake by them. (2.) How ancient they were; ever since the world began; God having promised when the world began, that the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head; that promise was echoed too when Adam called his wife's name Eve, life, for the sake of that seed of hers: When Eve called her first son Cain, saying, *I have gotten a man from the Lord*; and another son, Seth, settled; when Noah was called rest, and foretold that God should dwell in the tents of Shem. And it was not long after the new world began in Noah that the promise was made to Abraham, that in his seed the nations of the earth should be blessed. (3.) What a wonderful harmony and concert there was among them; God spake the same thing by them all, and therefore it is said to be *discrepant*, not by the mouths, but by the mouth of the prophets, for they all spake of Christ as it were with one mouth.

Now what was this salvation which was prophesied of?

1. It is a rescue from the malice of our enemies. It is *ἐκ τῆς ἐχθρῆς τοῦ σατανᾶ* a salvation out of our enemies, from among them, and out of the power of them that hate us, ver. 71. It is a salvation from sin and the dominion of Satan over us, both by corruptions within and temptations without. The carnal Jews expected to be delivered from under the Roman yoke, but intimation was betimes given that it should be a redemption of another nature. He shall save his people from their sins, that they may not have dominion over them, *Matt. i. 21.*

2. It is a restoration to the favour of God, it is to perform the mercy promised to our forefathers, ver. 72. The Redeemer shall not only break the serpent's head, the author of our ruin, but he shall reinstate us in the mercy of God, and re-establish us in his covenant; he shall bring us as it were into a paradise again, which was signified by the promises made to the patriarchs, and the holy covenant made with them: the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, ver. 73. Observe, (1.) That which was promised to the fathers, and is performed to us, is mercy, pure mercy, nothing in it is owing to our merit, we deserve wrath and the curse, but all to the mercy of God, which designed us grace and life; *ex mero motu*, he loved us because he would love us. (2.) God herein had an eye to his covenant, his holy covenant; that covenant with Abraham; *I will be a God to thee and thy seed.* This his seed had really forfeited by their transgressions; this he seemed to have forgotten in the calamities brought upon them, but he will now remember it, will make it appear that he remembers it, for upon that is grounded all his returns of mercy; *Lev. xxvi. 12. Then will I remember my covenant.*

3. It is a qualification for and an encouragement to the service of God. This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham, That he would give us power and grace to serve him, in an acceptable manner to him, and a comfortable manner to ourselves, ver. 74, 75. Here seems to be an allusion to the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, which God tells Moses was in pursuance of the covenant he made with Abraham. *Exod. iii. 6, 7, 8.* and that this was the design of his bringing them out of Egypt, *that they might serve God upon this mountain, Exod. iii. 12.* Note, The great design of gospel-grace is not to discharge us from, but to engage us to and encourage us in the service of God. Under this notion Christianity was always to be looked upon as intended to make us truly religious, to admit us into the service of God, to bind us to it, and to quicken us in it. We are therefore delivered from the iron yoke of sin, that our necks may be put under the sweet and easy yoke of the Lord Jesus; *The very bonds which he has loosed, do bind us faster unto him. Psal. cxvi. 16. see Rom. xviii. 19.* We are hereby enabled, (1.) To serve God without fear, *ἀποφθάρ*; we are therefore put into a state of holy safety, that we might serve God with a holy security, and serenity of mind, as those that are quiet from the fears of evil. God must be served with a filial fear, a reverent, obedient fear, an awakening, quickening fear, but not with a slavish fear, like that of the foolish servant, who represented him to himself as a hard master and unmerciful; not with that fear that has torment and amazement in it; not with the fear of a legal spirit, a spirit of bondage, but with the boldness of an evangelical spirit, a spirit of adoption. (2.) To serve him in holiness and rightfulness, which includes the whole duty of man towards God and our neighbour. It is both the intention and the direct tendency of the gospel, to renew up in us that image of God in which man was at first made, which consisteth in righteousness and true holiness, *Eph. iv. 24.* Christ redeemed us that we might serve God, not in the legal services of sacrifice and offerings, but in the spiritual services of holiness and righteousness, *Psalm l. 14.* (3.) To serve him, before him, in the duties of his immediate worship wherein we present ourselves before the Lord, to serve him as those that have an eye always upon him, and see his eye always upon us, upon our inward man; that is serving him before him. (4.) To serve him all the days of our life: the design of the gospel is to engage us to constancy and perseverance in the service of God, by shewing us how much depends upon it, that we do not draw back; and by shewing us how Christ loved us to the end, and thereby engaged us to love him to the end.

2. He blessed God for the work of preparation, for this salvation, which was to be done by John Baptist, ver. 76. Thou child, though now but a child of eight days old, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest; Jesus Christ is the highest, for he is God over all, blessed for evermore, *Rom. ix. 5.* equal with the Father; John Baptist was his prophet, as Aaron was Moses's prophet, *Exod. vii. 1.* what he said was as his mouth, what he did was as his harbinger. Prophecy had now long ceased, but in John it revived, as it had done in Samuel, who was born of an aged mother as John was after a long cessation. John's business was,

1. To prepare people for the salvation, by preaching repentance and reformation as great gospel duties; *Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, and but a little before him, to prepare his ways,* to call people to make room for him, and get ready for his entertainment. Let every thing that may obstruct his progress or embarrass it, or may hinder people from coming to him, be taken away: see *Isa. xl. 3, 4.* Let valleys be filled, and hills be brought low.

2. To give people a general idea of the salvation, that they might know not only what to do, but what to expect; for the doctrine he preached was that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. There are two things in which you must know this salvation consists.

1. The forgiveness of what we have done amiss; it is salvation by the remission of sins, those sins which stand in the way of the salvation, and by which we are all become liable to ruin and condemnation, ver. 77. John Baptist gave people to understand that, though their case was sad by reason of sin, it was not desperate, for pardon might be obtained through the tender mercy of our God; the bowels of mercy, for the word is: there was nothing in us but a piteous case to recommend us to the divine compassion.

2. Direction to do better for the time to come: The gospel salvation not only encourageth us to hope that the works of the darkness shall be forgiven us, but sets up a clear and true light, by which we may order our steps aright. In it the day-spring hath visited us from high, ver. 78. and this also is owing to the tender mercy of our God; Christ is arisen the morning light, the rising sun, *Mal. iv. 2.* The gospel brings light with it, *John iii. 19.* leaves us not to wander in darkness of Pagan ignorance, or in the moonlight of the Old Testament types or figures, but in it the day dawns; in John Baptist it began to break, but increased apace and shone more and more to the perfect day. We have as much reason to welcome the gospel-day who enjoy it, as those have to welcome the morning who had long waited for it. (1.) The gospel is discovering; it shews us that which before we were utterly in the dark about, ver. 79. it is to give light to them that sit in darkness, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; the day-spring visited this dark world to lighten the Gentiles, *Acts xxvi. 18.* (2.) It is reviving; it brings light to them that sit in the shadow of death, as condemned prisoners in the dungeon, to bring them the tidings of a pardon, at least of a reprieve, and opportunity of procuring a pardon, it proclaims the opening of the prison, *Isa. lxi. 1.* brings the light of life, how pleasant is that light. (3.) It is directing, it is to guide our feet in the way of peace, into that way which will bring us to peace at last. It is not only a light to our eyes, but a light to our feet, *Psalm cxix. 105.* it guides us into the way of making our peace with God, of keeping up a comfortable communion; that way of peace, which as sinners we have wandered from and have not known, *Rom. iii. 17.* nor could ever have known of ourselves.

In the last verse we have a short account of the younger years of John Baptist: though he was the son of a priest, he did not, like Samuel, go up, when he was a child, to minister before the Lord, for he was to prepare the way for a better priesthood. But we are here told,

1. Of his eminency as to the inward man. The child grew in parts and the capacities of his mind much more than other children; so that he waxed strong in spirit, had a strong judgment and strong resolution. Reason and cons-

conscience (both which are the candle of the Lord) were so strong in him, that he had the inferior faculties of appetite and passion in complete subjection betimes. By this it appeared he was sometimes filled with the Holy Ghost, for those that are full in the Lord, are strong in spirit.

2. Of his *obscurity* as to the outward man: he was in the deserts; not that he lived a hermit, cut off from the society of men; no, we have reason to think he went up to Jerusalem at the feasts, and frequented the synagogues on the sabbath-day, but his constant residence was in some of those scattered houses that were in the wilderness of Zuph or Maon, which we read of in the story of David. There he spent most of his time in contemplation and devotion, and had not his education in the schools, or at the feet of the rabbins. Note, There is many a one qualified for great usefulness, who yet is buried alive: and many are long so, who are designed, and are thereby in the fitting for so much greater usefulness at last; as John Baptist, who was in the desert only till the day of his shewing to Israel, when he was in the thirtieth year of his age. Note, There is a time fixed for the shewing of those favours to Israel, which are reserved: *The vision of them is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak, and shall not lie.*

CHAP. II.

In this chapter we have an account of the birth and infancy of our Lord Jesus: having had notice of his conception, and of the birth and infancy of his forerunner in the former chapter. The first-begotten is here brought into the world, let us go to meet him with our hosannas, blessed is he that cometh. Here is, (1.) The place and other circumstances of his birth, which spoke him the true Messiah, and such a one as we needed, but not such a one as the Jews expected. ver. 1—7. (2.) The notifying of his birth to the shepherds in that neighbourhood by an angel, the song of praise which the angels sung upon that occasion, and the spreading of the report of it by the shepherds, ver. 8—20. (3.) The circumcision of Christ, and the naming of him, ver. 21. (4.) The presenting of him in the temple, ver. 22—24. (5.) The testimonies of Simeon and Anna the prophetesses concerning him, ver. 25—39. (6.) Christ's growth and pregnancy, ver. 40—52. (7.) His observing the passover at twelve years old, and his disputing with the doctors in the temple, ver. 41—51. And this, with what we have met with, Matt. i. and ii. is all we have concerning our Lord Jesus, till he entered upon his public work in the thirtieth year of his age.

1. **AND** it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. 2. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) 3. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the house and lineage of David). 5. To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. 6. And so it was, that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 7. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapt him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

The fulness of time was now come, when God would send forth his Son made of a woman, and made under the law, and it was foretold that he should be born at Bethlehem. Now here we have an account of the time, place, and manner of it.

First, The time when our Lord Jesus was born. And several things may be gathered out of these verses, which intimate to us that it was the proper time.

1. He was born at the time when the fourth monarchy was in its height, just when it was become more than any of three before it, an universal monarchy. He was born in the days of Augustus Cesar, when the Roman empire extended itself further than ever before or since, including Parthia one way, and Britain another way; so that it was then called *Terrarum orbis imperium*, and here that empire is called *all the world*, ver. 1. for there was scarce any part of the civilized world but what was dependent on it. Now this was the time when the Messiah was to be born, according to Daniel's prophecy, Dan. ii. 44. *In the days of these kings; the kings of the fourth monarchy, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed.*

2. He was born when Judah was become a province of the empire, and tributary to it; as appears evidently by this, that when all the Roman empire was taxed, the Jews were taxed among the rest. Jerusalem was taken by Pompey the Roman general, about sixty years before this, who granted the government of the church to Hircanus, but not the government of the state, and by degrees it was more and more reduced, till now at length it was quite subdued; for Judea was ruled by Cyrenius the Roman governor of Syria, ver. 2. the Roman writers called him Sulpitius Quirinus. Now just at this juncture the Messiah was to be born, for so was dying Jacob's prophecy, *That Shiloh should come when the scepter was departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet*, Gen. xlix. 10. This was the first taxing that was made in Judea, the first badge of their servitude, therefore now Shiloh must come to set up his kingdom.

3. There is another circumstance as to the time, which is implied in this general enrolment of all the subjects of the empire; which is, that there was now an universal peace in the empire. The temple of Janus was not shut which never used to be if any wars were on foot; and now it was fit for the prince of peace to be born, in whose days, *swords should be beaten into ploughshares*.

Secondly, The place where our Lord Jesus was born is very observable; he was born at Bethlehem, so it was foretold, Micah v. 2. the scribes so understood it, Matt. ii. 5, 6. so did the common people, John vii. 42. The name of the place was significant, Bethlehem signifies *the house of bread*; a proper place for him to be born in who is the bread of life, the bread that came down from heaven. But that was not all, Bethlehem was the city of David, where he was born, and therefore there he must be born who was the son of David. Zion was also called the city of David, 2 Sam. v. 7. yet Christ was not born there; for Bethlehem was that city of David where he was born in meanness, to be a shepherd; and that our Saviour when he humbled himself, chose for the place of his birth; not Zion, where he ruled in power and prosperity, that was to be a type of the church of Christ, that

mount Zion. Now when the virgin Mary was with child, and near her time, providence so ordered it, that by order from the emperor all the subjects of the Roman empire were to be taxed; that is, they were to give in their names to the proper officers, and they were to be registered and enrolled, according to their families, which is the proper signification of the word here used, and their being taxed was but secondary; it is supposed they made profession of subjection to the Roman empire, either by some set form of words, or at least by payment of some small tribute, a penny suppose, in token of their allegiance, like a man's turning tenant. Thus are they vassals upon record, and may thank themselves.

Now according to this decree, the Jews (who were now nice in distinguishing their tribes and families) provided that in their enrolments particular care should be had to preserve the memory of them. Thus foolishly are they solicitous to save the shadow when they had lost the substance.

Now that which Augustus designed, was either to gratify his pride in knowing the numbers of his people, and proclaiming it to the world, or he did it in policy to strengthen his interest and make his government appear the more formidable: but providence had another reach to it. All the world shall be at the trouble of being enrolled, only that Joseph and Mary may; this brought them up from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem in Judea, because they were of the stock and lineage of David, ver. 1, 5. and perhaps being poor and low, they thought the royalty of their extraction rather a burden and expence to them, than a matter of pride. Because it is difficult to suppose that every Jew (women as well as men) was obliged to repair to the city of which their ancestors were, and there be enrolled; now at a time when they were kept not to the bounds of their tribes as formerly, it may be offered as a conjecture, that this great exactness was only used with the family of David, concerning which it is probable the emperor gave particular orders, it having been the royal family, and still talked of as designed to be so, that he might know the number and strength of that. And divers ends of providence were served by his.

1. Hereby the virgin Mary was brought big with child to Bethlehem, to be delivered there according to the prediction; whereas she had designed to lie in at Nazareth. See how man purposeth and God disposeth; and how providence orders all things for the fulfilling of the scripture; and makes use of the projects men have for the serving their own purposes, quite beyond their intention to serve his.

2. Hereby it appeared that Jesus Christ was of the seed of David, for else what brings his mother to Bethlehem now, but because she was of the stock and lineage of David? And this was a material thing to be proved, and required such an authentic proof as this. Justin Martyr and Tertullian, two of the most early advocates for the Christian religion, appeal to these rolls or records of the Roman empire, for the proof of Christ's being born of the house of David.

3. Hereby it appeared that he was made under the law; for he became a subject of the Roman empire as soon as he was born, a servant of rulers, Isa. xlix. 7. Many suppose that being born during the time of the taxing, he was enrolled as well at his father and mother, that he might appear how he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant; instead of having kings tributaries to him, when he came into the world he was himself a tributary.

Thirdly, The circumstances of his birth, which were very mean, and under all possible marks of contempt. He was indeed a first-born son, but it was a poor honour to be the first-born of such a poor woman as Mary was, who had no inheritance to which he might be intitled as first-born, but what was in nativity.

1. He was under some abasements in common with other children; he was wrapped in swaddling clothes as other children are when they are new born, as if he could be bound or needed to be kept straight. He that makes darkness a swaddling band for the sea, was himself wrapped in swaddling bands, Job xxxviii. 9. The everlasting father became a child of time, and men said of him, whose outgoings were of old from everlasting, *we know this man whom he is*, John vii. 27. The Ancient of days became an infant of a span long.

2. He was under some abasements peculiar to himself.

1. He was born at an inn. That son of David that was the glory of his father's house, had no inheritance that he could command, no not in the city of David; no nor a friend that would accommodate his mother in distress with lodgings to be brought to bed in. Christ was born in an inn, to intimate, that he came into the world but to sojourn here for a while as in an inn, and to teach us to do likewise. An inn receives all comers, and so doth Christ. He hangs out the banner of love for his sign, and whoever comes to him, he will in no wise cast out; only, unlike other inns, he welcomes those that come without money and without price. All on free-cost.

2. He was born in a stable; so some think the word signifies, which we translate a manger, a place for cattle to stand to be fed in; because there was no room in the inn; in want of conveniences, nay for want of necessities, he was laid in the manger, instead of a cradle. And the word which we render swaddling clothes, some derive from a word that signifies to rend or tear, and thence infer, that he was so far from having a good suit of child-bed linen, that his very swaddles were ragged and torn. His being born in a stable and laid in a manger, was an instance, (1.) Of the poverty of his parents; had they been rich, room would have been made for them, but being poor they must shift as they could. (2.) Of the corruption and degeneracy of manners in that age; that a woman in reputation for virtue and honour should be used so barbarously. If there had been any common humanity among them they would not have turned a woman in travail into a stable. (3.) It was an instance of the humiliation of our Lord Jesus. We were become by sin like an outcast infant, helpless and forlorn, and such a one Christ was. Thus he would answer the type of Moses the great prophet and lawgiver of the Old Testament, who was in his infancy cast out in an ark of bulrushes, as Christ in a manger. Christ would hereby put a contempt upon all worldly glory, and teach us to fight it. Since his own received him not, let us not think it strange if they receive us not.

8. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9. And lo, the angel of the LORD came upon them, and the glory of the LORD shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. 10. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. 11. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the LORD. 12. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. 13. And suddenly there was with the angel

a multitude of the heavenly host praising God,
 saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth
 peace, and good will towards men. 15. And when the
 angels were gone away from them into heaven,
 the shepherds said one to another, Let us go now
 even to Bethlehem, and see this thing which is
 told us, which the LORD hath made known unto us
 by angels. 16. And they came with haste, and found Mary and
 Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. 17. And when
 they had seen it, they made known abroad the thing
 which was told them concerning this child. 18. And
 all they that heard it, wondered at those things which
 were told them by the shepherds. 19. But Mary kept
 all these things, and pondered them in her heart. 20.
 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising
 God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as
 it was told unto them.

The meanest circumstances of Christ's humiliation were all along attended with some discoveries of glory to balance them, and take off the offence of them; for even when he humbled himself, God did in some measure exalt him, and gave him earnestness of his future exaltation. When we saw him *wrapped in swaddling cloths and laid in a manger*, we were tempted to say, sure this cannot be the *Son of God*; but see his birth attended as it is here with a choir of angels, and we shall say, surely it can be no other but the *Son of God*, concerning whom it is said, when he was *brought into the world, Let all the angels of God worship him*, Heb. i. 6.

We had in Matthew an account of the notice given of the arrival of this ambassador, this prince from heaven, to the wife men who were Gentiles, by a star; here we are told of the notice given of it to the shepherds, who were Jews, by an angel; to each, God chose to speak in the language they were most conversant with.

1. See here how the shepherds were employed, they were abiding in the fields joining to Bethlehem, and keeping watch over their flocks by night, **ver. 8.** The angel was not sent to the chief priests or the elders, they were not prepared to receive these tidings, but to a company of poor shepherds that were like Jacob, *plain men dwelling in tents*, not like Elam, *cunning hunters*. The patriarchs were shepherds, Moses and David, particularly, were called from keeping sheep to rule God's people: and by this instance God would shew that he had still a favour for those of that low and untutored employment. Tidings were brought to Moses of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt when he was keeping sheep, and to these shepherds, who, it is probable were devout pious men, the tidings were brought of a greater Salvation. Observe, (1.) They were not *sleeping* in their flocks when this news was brought them, (though many have very accidental intelligence from heaven in *slumbering upon the bed*) but *abiding in the fields and watching*. Those that would hear from God must *stir up themselves*. They were broad awake, and therefore could not be deceived in what they saw and heard, so as those may be who are half asleep. (2.) They were not employed in acts of devotion, but in the business of their calling; they were *keeping watch over their flock*, to secure them from thieves and beasts of prey, it probably being in the summer time, when they kept their cattle out all night, as we do now, and did not house them. Note, We are not out of the way of divine visit, when we are sensibly employed in an honest calling, and abide with God in it.

2. How they were surprised with the appearance of an angel to them, *ver. 9.* *Behold an angel of the Lord came upon them, of a sudden, in the night,* stood over them; most probably in the air over their heads, as coming immediately from heaven; We read it, the angel, as it were the same that appeared once and again in the chapter before, *the angel Gabriel*, that was not caused to fly swiftly, but that is not certain. The angel's *coming upon them*, intimates that they little thought of such a thing or expected it; for it is in a preventing way that gracious visits are made us from heaven, *or ever we are aware.* That they might be sure it was an angel from heaven, they saw and heard *the glory of the Lord round about them*, such as made the nights as bright as day; such a glory as used to attend God's appearance: a heavenly glory, or an exceeding great glory, such as they could not bear the dazzling lustre of. This made them sore afraid, put them into a mighty consternation, as fearing some evil tidings; while we are conscious to ourselves of so much guilt, we have reason to fear, lest every express from heaven be a messenger of wrath.

3. What the message was which the angel had to deliver to the shepherds, *ver. 10, 11, 12, (1.)* He gives a *superfugium* to their fears; fear not, for we have nothing to say to you that needs be a terror to you, you need not fear your enemies and should not fear your friends. (2.) He furnished them with abundant matter for joy: Behold, I *evangelize* to you *great joy*; I solemnly declare it, and you have reason to bid it welcome, for it shall bring joy to all people, and not to the people of the Jews only; that unto you is born this day, at this time, a *Saviour*, the Saviour that has been so long expected, *which is Christ the Lord, in the city of David*, *ver. 11.* Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed; he is the Lord, Lord of all; is a sovereign prince: Nay, he is God, for the Lord in the Old Testament answers to Jehovah. He is a Saviour, and he will be Saviour to those only that accept of him for their Lord. The Saviour is born, he is born this day; and since it is matter of *great joy* to all people, it is not to be kept secret, you may proclaim it, you may tell it to whom you please. He is born in the place where it was foretold he should be born, in the *city of David*, and he is born to you, to the Jews, he is sent in the first place to bless you, to you shepherds, though poor and mean in the world. This refers to *Isa. ix. 6. Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.* To you men, not to us angels, he took not on him our nature. This is matter of joy indeed to all people, long looked for is come at last; let heaven and earth rejoice before this Lord, *for he cometh.* (3.) He gives them a sign for the confirming of their faith in this matter. How shall we find out this child in Bethlehem, which is now full of the descendants from David? You will find him by this token, he is lying in a *manger*, where surely never any new-born infant was laid before. They expected to be told, you shall find him, though a babe, dressed up in robes and lying in the best house in the town, lying in state with a numerous train of attendants in rich liveries; no, you will find him wrapped in *swaddling clothes*, and *laid in a manger*. When Christ was here upon earth, he distinguished himself, and made himself remarkable, by nothing so much as the influences of his humiliation.

4. The angels doxology to God, and congratulations of men upon this solemn occasion, *ver.* 13, 14. The message was no sooner delivered by one angel, that was sufficient to go express, but suddenly there was with that angel a *multitude of the heavenly hosts*; now we may be sure to make a chorus, that were heard by the shepherds *praising God*; and to be sure their

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5. The gifts while the shepherds went to the search for the child, were (1) They confided about the year 15. W. He thought it were strange that they could attend to that, or that he had *the voice of an angel* that he had *heard from heaven*; (for angels, when they appear, never make any long discourses, returned as soon as they had uttered their message) *therefore, let us go to another*. *Let us go to Bethlehem*. (2) When at any distance from the upper world are no more to be expected, we must try to improve the advantages we have for the recovery of our faith, and for bringing up of our communion with God in this lower world. And it is a reflection upon the testimony of God, that we are persuaded in conscience, to get it corroborated by other testimonies. But still, the shepherds do not speak doubtfully, but as persons who are assured, not only, but with assurance. *Let us go do this thing, which is to our step*, for what room was left to doubt of it, when *the Lord had thus said, and he said to them, I will be with you, I will be with you*. (3.) They immediately made the visit, *re. 16.* They had a long journey, *with haste* to the place, which probably remained here to be confirmed, particularly that is recorded; *Go to the birth of the young man, whom we have found Mary and Joseph, and to be at the singing of the angels*, and to be at the meeting and means, in which they found *Christ the Lord*, was made to be the faith, who themselves knew what it was to be a life of obedience to the communion with God in very poor and low circumstances. We can easily think, that the shepherds told Joseph and Mary, what they had seen, and they had seen, and the song of the angels, they had heard, which was a great encouragement to them, more than the visit had been any help in the birth of the child in the town. And it is probable, Joseph and Mary told their own and their visitations they had had concerning the child; and that by their own and their experiences to each other, they greatly strengthened one another's faith.

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7. The use which those made of those things who did believe them, and receive the impression of them.

1. The virgin Mary made them the matter of her *private meditation*. She said little, but *kept all these things*, and *pondered them in her heart*, ver. 19. She laid the evidences together, and kept them in reserve, to be compared with the discoveries that should after be made her. As she had silently left it to God to clear up her honesty, when that was suspected, so she silently leaves it to him to publish her honour, now when it was veiled; and it is satisfaction enough to find, that it nobody else takes notice of the birth of her child unborn. Note, The truths of Christ are worth keeping; and the way to keep them safe, is to *ponder them*; Meditation is the best help to memory.

2. The shepherds made them the matter of their more *public* praise. If others were not affected with those things, yet they themselves were, *var.* 20. They *returned glorifying and praising God*, in concurrence with the holy angels; if others would not regard the report they made to them, God would accept the thanksgiving they offered to him. They praised God for what *they had heard* from the angel, and for what *they had seen*, the babe in the manger; and just then *in the fleshling*, when they came in, as it had been spoken to them. They thanked God they had seen Christ, though in the depth of his humiliation: as afterwards the cross of Christ, to show his *manger*, though to some it was *foolishness* and a *stumbling block*; yet others saw in it, and admired and praised, the wisdom of God and the power of God.

21. And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS ; which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. 22. And when the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were

accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord. 23. (As it is written in the law of the Lord, every male that openeth the womb, shall be called holy to the Lord). 24. And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons.

Our Lord Jesus being *made of a woman*, was made under the law, Gal. iv. 4. He was not only the son of a daughter of Adam, made under the law of nature, but as the son of a daughter of Abraham, he was made under the law of Moses; he puts his neck under that yoke, though it was a heavy yoke, and a shadow of good things to come: And though its institutions were *beggarly elements*, and *rudiments of this world*, as the apostle calls them, Christ submitted to it, that he might with the *better grace* cancel it, and set it aside for us.

Now here we have two instances of his being made under that law, and submitting to it.

1. He was circumcised on the very day that the law appointed, *ver. 21.* When eight days were accomplished, that day seven-night that he was born, they circumcised him. (1.) Though it was a painful operation, surely a bloody husband thou hast been, said Zipporah to Moses, because of the circumcision, Exod. iv. 25. yet Christ would undergo it for us; nay, therefore he submitted to it, to give an instance of his early obedience, his obedience unto blood. Then he shed his blood by drops, which afterwards he poured out in purple streams. (2.) Though it supposed him a stranger, that was by that ceremony to be admitted into covenant with God, whereas he had always been his beloved Son. Nay, though it supposed him a sinner, that needed to have his filthiness taken away, whereas he had no impurity or superfluity of naughtiness to be cut off, yet he submitted to it; nay, therefore he submitted to it, because he would be made in the likeness not only of flesh but of sinful flesh, Rom. viii. 3. (3.) Though thereby he made himself a debtor to the whole law, Gal. v. 3. yet he submitted to it: nay, therefore, he submitted to it, because he would take upon him the form of a servant, though he was free-born. Christ was circumcised, (1.) That he might own himself of the seed of Abraham, and of that nation of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, and who was to take on him the seed of Abraham, Heb. ii. 16. (2.) That he might own himself a surety for our sins, and an undertaker for our safety. Circumcision (said Dr. Goodwin) was our bond, whereby we acknowledged ourselves debtors to the law; and Christ, by being circumcised, did as it were set his hand to it, being made sin for us. The ceremonial law consisted much in sacrifices, Christ hereby obliged himself to offer not the blood of bulls or goats, but his own blood, which none that ever were circumcised could oblige themselves to, but he only. (3.) That he might justify and put an honour upon the dedication of the infant seed of the church of God, by that ordinance which is the instituted seal of the covenant, and of the righteousness which is by faith, as circumcision was, (Rom. iv. 11.) and baptism is. And certainly his being circumcised at eight days old, doth make much more for the dedicating of the seed of the faithful by baptism in their infancy, than his being baptised at thirty years old doth, for the deferring of it till they are grown up. The change of the ceremony alters not the substance.

At his circumcision, according to the custom, he had his name given him, he was called Jesus or Joshua, for he was so named of the angel to his mother Mary, before he was conceived in the womb, Luke i. 31. and to his supposed father Joseph after, Matt. i. 21. (1.) It was a common name among the Jews, as John was, (Col. iv. 11.) and in this he would be made like unto his brethren. (2.) It was the name of two eminent types of him in the Old Testament, Joshua the successor of Moses, that was commander of Israel and conqueror of Canaan; and Joshua the high priest, who was therefore purposely crowned, that he might prefigure Christ as a priest upon his throne, Zach. vi. 11, 13. (3.) It was very significant of his undertaking; Jesus signifies a Saviour. He would be denominated not from the glories of his divine nature, but from his gracious design as Mediator, he brings salvation.

2. He was presented in the temple: This was done with an eye to the law, and at the time appointed by the law, when he was forty days old, when the days of her purification were accomplished, *ver. 22.* many copies, and authentic ones, read *αἱματι* for *αἵματι*, the days of their purification, the purification both of the mother and of the child, for so it was intended to be by the law; and our Lord Jesus though he had no impurity to be cleansed from, yet submitted to it, as he did to circumcision, because he was made sin for us; and that, as by the circumcision of Christ we might be circumcised in the virtue of our union and communion with him with a spiritual circumcision made without hands, Col. ii. 11. so in the purification of Christ, we might be spiritually purified from that filthiness and corruption which we brought into the world with us. Now according to the law,

1. The child Jesus being a first-born son, was presented to the Lord in one of the courts of the temple: The law is here recited, *ver. 23.* Every male that opens the womb, shall be called holy to the Lord, because by a special writ of protection the first-born of Israel were preserved, when the first-born of the Egyptians were slain by the destroying angel; so that Christ as first-born was a priest by a title surer than that of Aaron's house. Christ was the first-born among many brethren, and was called holy to the Lord, so as never any other was, yet he was presented to the Lord, as the other first-born were, and no otherwise, Though he was newly come out of the bosom of the Father, yet he was presented to him by the hands of a priest, as if he had been a stranger that needed one to introduce him. His being presented to the Lord, now signified his presenting himself to the Lord as Mediator, when he was caused to draw near and approach unto him, Jer. xxx. 21. But according to the law he was redeemed, Numb. xviii. 15. The first-born of man shalt thou redeem, and five shekles was the value, Lev. xxvii. 6. Numb. xviii. 16. But probably in case of poverty the priest was allowed to take less, or perhaps nothing, for no mention is made of it here. Christ was presented to the Lord not to be brought back, for his ear was bored to God's door-post to serve him for ever; and though he is not left in the temple as Samuel was, to minister there, yet like him he is given to the Lord as long as he lives, and ministers to him in the true temple not made with hands.

2. The mother brought her offering, *ver. 24.* when she had presented that son of hers unto the Lord, who was to be the great sacrifice, she might have been excused from offering any other; but so it is said in the law of the Lord, that law which was yet in force, and therefore so it must be done, she must offer a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons; had she been of ability, she must have brought a lamb for a burnt-offering, and a dove for a sin-offering; but being poor and not able to reach the price of a lamb, she brings two doves, one for a burnt-offering, and the other for a sin-offering: See Lev. xii. 7, 8. To teach us in every address to God, and particularly in those upon special occasions, both to give thanks to God, for his mercies to us, and to acknowledge with sorrow and shame, our sins against him, and in both we must give glory to him; nor do we ever want matter for both. Christ was not conceived and born in sin, as others are, so that there was not

that occasion in his case that is in others; yet, because he was made under the law, he complied with it: Thus it became him to fulfil all righteousness. Much more doth it become the best of men to join in confessions of sin, for who can say, I have made my heart clean?

25. And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just, and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. 26. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ: 27. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, 28. ¶ Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, 29. Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: 30. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, 31. Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people: 32. A light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. 33. And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. 34. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; 35. (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. 36. And there was one Anna a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; 37. And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. 38. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. 39. And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city in Nazareth. 40. And the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him,

Still Christ has honour done to him, then when he humbles himself to balance the offence of it; that we might not be stumbled at the meanness of his birth, angels then did him honour; and now, that we may not be offended at his being presented in the temple, like other children born in sin, and without any manner of solemnity peculiar to him; but silently, and in the croud of other children, Simeon and Anna now do him honour by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

First, A very honourable testimony is borne to him by Simeon, which was both a reputation to the child, and an encouragement to the parents, and might have been a happy introducing of the priests into an acquaintance with the Saviour, if those watchmen had not been blind. Now observe here,

1. The account that is given us concerning this Simeon or Simon. He dwelt now in Jerusalem, and was eminent for his piety and communion with God: some learned men that have been conversant with the Jewish writers, find that there was at this time one Simeon, a man of great note in Jerusalem, the son of Hillel, and the first to whom they gave the title of Rabban, the highest title that they gave to their doctors, and which was never given but to seven of them: He succeeded his father Hillel as president of the college which his father founded, and of the great Sanhedrin. The Jews say, he was endued with a prophetic spirit, and that he was turned out of his place, because he witnessed against the common opinion of the Jews concerning the temporal kingdom of the Messiah; and they likewise observe, that there is no mention of him in their Mishna or book of traditions; which intimates that he was no patron of these fooleries. One thing objected against this conjecture is, that at this time his father Hillel was living, and that he himself lived many years after this, as appear by the Jewish histories; but as to that he is not here said to be old; and his saying, now let thy servant depart, intimates that he was willing to die now, but doth not conclude that therefore he did die quickly. St. Paul lived many years after he had spoken of his death as near, Acts xx. 25. Another thing objected is, that the son of Simeon was Gamaliel, a Pharisee, and an enemy to Christianity, but as to that, it is no new thing for a faithful lover of Christ to have a son a bigotted Pharisee.

The account given of him here is, (1.) That he was just and devout, just towards men and devout towards God; these two must always go together, and each will befriended the other, but neither will alone for the defect of the other. (2.) That he waited for the consolation of Israel, i. e. for the coming of the Messiah, in whom alone the nation of Israel, that was now miserably harassed and oppressed, would find consolation. Christ is not only the author of his people's comfort, but the matter and ground of it, the consolation of Israel. He was long a coming, and they who believed he would come continued waiting, desiring his coming, and hoping for it with patience; I had almost said with some degree of impatience waiting till it came. He understood by books, as Daniel, that the time was at hand, and therefore was now more than ever big with expectation of it. The unbelieving Jews who still expect that which is already come, use it as an oath of solemn protestation, As ever I hope to see the consolation of Israel so and so it is. Note, The consolation of Israel is to be waited for, and it is worth waiting for, and it will be very welcome to those who have waited for it and continued waiting. (3.) The Holy Ghost was upon him, not only as a Spirit of holiness, but as a Spirit of prophecy: He was filled with the Holy Ghost, and enabled to speak things above himself. (4.) He had a gracious promise made him, that before he died he should have a sight of the Messiah, *ver. 26.* He was searching what manner of time the Spirit of Christ in the Old Testament prophets did signify, and whether it were not now at hand; and he received this oracle (for so the word signifies) that he should not see death before he had seen the Messiah, the Lord's anointed. Note, Those, and those only, can with courage see death, and look it in the face without terror, that have had by faith a sight of Christ.

2. The seasonable coming of Simeon into the temple, at the time when Christ was presented there, *ver. 27.* just then, when Joseph and Mary brought in the child to be registered as it were in the church-book, among the first-born, Simeon came by direction of the Spirit, into the temple. The same Spirit that had provided for the support of his hope, now provided for the transport of his joy. It was whispered in his ear, *Go to the temple now, and you shall see what you have longed to see.* Note, Those that would see Christ must go to his temple, for there the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to meet you, and there you must be ready to meet him.

3. The abundant satisfaction wherewith he welcomed this light; he took him up in his arms, *ver. 28.* he embraced him with the greatest affection imaginable, laid him in his bosom, as near his heart as he could, which is as full of joy as it can hold. He took him up in his arms to present him to the Lord, so some think, either to do the parent's part or the priest's part; for divers of the ancients say he was himself a priest. When we receive the record which the gospel gives us of Christ, with a lively faith, and the offer it makes us of Christ, with love and resignation, then we take Christ in our arms. It was promised him he should have a sight of Christ, but more is performed than was promised; he has him in his arms.

4. The solemn declaration he made hereupon: He blessed God, and said, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, ver. 29, 30, 31, 32.*

1. He has a pleasant prospect concerning himself, and (which is a great attainment) is got quite above the love of life and fear of death; nay, he is arrived to a holy contempt of life and desire of death: *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart,* for mine eyes have seen thy salvation I was promised a sight of before I died. Here is, (1.) An acknowledgement that God had been as good as his word; there has not failed one tittle of his good promises, as Solomon owns, *1 Kings viii. 56.* Note, Never any that hoped in God's word were made ashamed of their hope. (2.) A thanksgiving for it: He blessed God that he saw that salvation in his arms, which many prophets and kings desired to see, and might not. 3. A confession of his faith, that this child in his arms was the Saviour, the salvation itself; thy salvation, the salvation of thine appointing; the salvation which thou hast prepared with a great deal of contrivance. And while it has been thus long in the coming, it hath still been in the preparing. (4.) It is a farewell to this world, *Now let thy servant depart:* Now mine eyes have been blessed with this sight, let them be closed and see no more in this world. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, *Eccles. i. 8.* till it hath seen Christ, and then it is. What a poor thing does this world look to one that has Christ in his arms and salvation in his eye! Now adieu to all my friends and relations, all my enjoyments and employments here, even the temple itself. (5.) It is a welcome to death; *Now let thy servant depart.* Note, Death is a departure, the soul's departure out of the body, from the world of sense to the world of spirits. We must not depart till God give us our discharge, for we are his servants, and must not quit his service till we have accomplished our time. Moses was promised that he should see Canaan, and then die, but he prayed that that word might be altered, *Deut. iii. 24, 25.* Simeon is promised that he should not see death till he had seen Christ, and he is willing to construe that beyond what was expressed, as an intimation that when he had seen Christ he should die: *Lord, be it so, faith he, now let me depart.* See here, (1.) How comfortable the death of a good man is; he departs as God's servant from the place of his toil to that of rest. He departs in peace, peace with God, peace with his own conscience; in peace with death, well reconciled to it, well acquainted with it. He departs according to God's word, as Moses at the mouth of the Lord, *Deut. xxxiv. 5.* the word of precept, *Go up and die;* the word of promise, *I will come again and receive you to myself.* (2.) What is the ground of this comfort. For mine eyes hath seen thy salvation. This speaks more than a great complacency in the sight, like that of Jacob, *Gen. xli. 30.* *Now let me die, since I have seen thy face;* it speaks a believing expectation of a happy state on the other side of death, through this salvation he now had a sight of, which not only takes off the terror of death, but makes it gain, *Phil. i. 21.* Note, Those that have welcomed Christ, may welcome death.

2. He has pleasant prospect concerning the world, and concerning the church. This salvation shall be,

1. A blessing to the world. It is prepared before the face of all people, not to be hid in a corner, but to be made known; to be a light to lighten the Gentiles that now sit in darkness: They shall have the knowledge of him and of God, and another world through him: This has reference to *Isa. xx. 6.* *I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles;* for Christ came to be the light of the world, not a candle in the Jewish candlestick, but the sun of righteousness.

2. A blessing to the church: *The glory of thy people Israel.* It was an honour to the Jewish nation that the Messiah sprung out of one of their tribes, and was born and lived and died among them. And of those who were Israelites indeed, of the spiritual Israel, he was indeed the glory, and will be so to eternity, *Isa. lx. 19.* They shall glory in him, *In the Lord, shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory, Isa. xiv. 25.* When Christ ordered his apostles to preach the gospel to all nations, therein he made himself a light to lighten the Gentiles; and when he added, *beginning at Jerusalem,* he made himself the glory of his people Israel.

3. The prediction concerning this child, which he delivered with his blessing to Joseph and Mary. They marvelled at these things, which were still more and more fully and plainly spoken concerning this child, *ver. 33.* And because they were afflicted with and had their faith strengthened by that which was said to them, here is more said to them.

1. Simon shews them what reason they had to rejoice: for he blessed them, *ver. 34.* he pronounced them blessed who had the honour to be related to this child, and were intrusted with the bringing him up: He prayed for them that God would bless them, and would have others do so too. They had reason to rejoice, for this child should be not only a comfort and honour to them but a public blessing: He is set for the rising again of many in Israel, i. e. for the conversion of many to God that are dead and buried in sin, and for the consolation of many in God that are sunk and lost in sorrow and despair. And those whom he is set for the fall of, may be the same with those whom he is set for the rising again of: He is set *ut moris xai anastasi;* for their fall, in order to their rising again; to humble and abase them, and bring them off from all confidence in themselves, that they may be exalted by relying on Christ: wounds and then heals. Paul falls and rises again.

2. He shews them likewise what reason they had to rejoice with trembling, according to the advice given of old, with reference to the Messiah's kingdom, *Psal. ii. 11.* Let Joseph and Mary especially, should be lifted up, with the abundance of the revelations; here is a thorn in the flesh for them, an allay to their joy, and it is what we sometimes need.

1. It is true, Christ shall be a blessing to Israel, but there are those in Israel whom he is set for the fall of, whose corruptions will be provoked, who will be prejudiced and enraged against him and offended, and whose sin and ruin will be aggravated by the revelation of Jesus Christ; many that will extract poison to themselves out of the balm of Gilead, and split their souls on the rock of salvation, to whom this precious foundation stone will

be a stone of stumbling. This refers to that prophecy, *Isa. viii. 14, 15.* He shall be for a sanctuary to some, and yet for a snare to others, *1 Pet. ii. 7.*

8. Note, As it is pleasant to think how many there are to whom Christ there are to whom it is a favour of life unto life, so it is sad to think how many to be admired by some, but by others, by many, spoken against. He had many eyes upon it during the time of his public ministry, he was a sign, but he had many tongues against him, the contradiction and reproach of sinners, that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed, *ver. 35.* i. e. upon this occasion men will shew themselves, will discover, and so distinguish themselves. The secret good affections and dispositions in the minds of some, will be revealed by their embracing Christ and closing with him; the secret corruptions and vicious dispositions of others, that otherwise would never have appeared so bad, will be revealed by their enmity to Christ and their rage against him. Men will be judged of by the thoughts of their hearts, their thoughts concerning Christ; are they for him, or are they for his adversaries? The word of God is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart, and by it we are discovered to ourselves, and shall be judged hereafter.

2. It is true, Christ shall be a comfort to his mother, but he not thou too proud of it, for a sword shall pass through thine own soul also. He shall be a suffering Jesus; and (1.) Thou shalt suffer with him, by sympathy, more than any other of his friends, because of the nearness of thy relation, and strength of affection to him. When he was abused, it was a sword in her bones. When she stood by his cross, and saw him dying, we may well think her inward grief was such, that it might truly be said, *a sword pierced through her soul,* it cut her to the heart. (2.) Thou shalt suffer for him; many understand it as a prediction of her martyrdom; and some of the ancients say, it had its accomplishment in that. Note, In the midst of our greatest delights and advancements in this world, it is good for us to know that bonds and afflictions abide us.

Secondly, he is taken notice of by one Anna or Ann, a prophetess, that one of each sex might bear witness to him in whom both men and women are invited to believe, that they may be saved. Observe,

1. The account here given of this Anna, who she was: she was, (1.) A prophetess, the Spirit of prophecy now began to revive, which had ceased in Israel about three hundred years. Perhaps no more is meant but that she was one who had understanding in the scriptures above other women, and made it her business to instruct the younger women in the things of God. Though it was a very degenerate age of the church, yet God left not himself without witness. (2.) She was the daughter of Phanniel; her father's name, (saith Grotius) is mentioned, to put us in mind of Jacob's Phanniel or Peniel, *Gen. xxxii. 30* that now the mystery of that should be unfolded, when in Christ we should as it were see God face to face, and our lives be preserved; and her name signifies gracious. (3.) She was of the tribe of Asher, which was in Galilee; this, some think, is taken notice of, to refute those who said, *Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet,* when no sooner did prophecy revive but it appeared from Galilee. (4.) She was of a great age, a widow of about eighty-four years; some think she had now been eighty-four years a widow, and then she must be considerably above a hundred years old; others, rather than suppose that a woman so very old should be capable of fasting and praying as she did, suppose that she was only eighty-four years of age, and had been long a widow: Though she was a young widow, and had lived with her husband but seven years, yet she never married again, but continued a widow to her dying day, which is mentioned to her praise. (2.) She was a constant resident in or at least attendant on the temple. Some think she had lodgings in the courts of the temple, either in an alms-house, being maintained by the temple charities; or, as a prophetess she was lodged there, as in a proper place to be consulted and advised with by those that desired to know the mind of God; others think her not departing from the temple means no more, but that she was constantly there at the time of divine service: When any good work was to be done, she was ready to join in it. It is most probable she had an apartment of her own among the outbuildings of the temple; and, besides her constant attendance on the public worship, abounded in private devotions, for she served God with fasting and prayers night and day: Having no secular business to employ herself in, or being past it, she gave herself up wholly to her devotions, and not only fasted twice in the week, but always lived a mortified life, and spent that time in religious exercises, which others spent in eating and drinking and sleeping; she not only observed the hours of prayer, but prayed night and day; was always in a praying frame, lived a life of prayers, gave herself to prayer, frequent ejaculations, large in solemn prayer, and very particular in her intercessions. And in those she served God; that was it that put a value upon them, and an excellency into them: The Pharisees fasted often, and made long prayers, but they served themselves and their own pride and covetousness in their fastings and prayers; but this good woman not only did that which was good but did it from a good principle, and with a good end; she served God; and aimed at his honour in fasting and prayers. Note, 1. Devotion is a thing we ought to be constant in, other duties are in season now and then, but we must pray always. 2. It is a pleasant sight to see aged Christians abounding in acts of devotion, as those that are not weary of well-doing, that do not think themselves above these exercises, or past them, but that take more and more pleasure in them, and see more and more need of them till they come to heaven. 3. Those who are diligent and faithful to improve the light and means they have, shall have further discoveries made them. Anna is now at length abundantly recompensed for her attendance so many years in the temple.

2. The testimony she bore to our Lord Jesus, *ver. 38.* She came in at that instant when the child was presented, and Simeon discoursed concerning him; she who was so constant to the temple, could not miss the opportunity.

Now, (1.) She gave thanks likewise to the Lord just as Simeon, perhaps like him, wishing now to depart in peace. Note, Those to whom Christ is made known, have reason enough to give thanks to the Lord for so great a favour; and we should be excited to that duty, by the praises and thanksgivings of others; why should not we give thanks likewise, as well as they? Anna concurred with Simeon, and helped to make up the harmony. She confessed unto the Lord, so that it may be read; she made an open profession of her faith concerning this child.

(2.) She, as a prophetess, instructed others concerning him: She spake of him to all them that believed the Messiah would come, and with him looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Redemption was the thing wanted, waited for and wished for; redemption in Jerusalem, for from thence the word of the Lord was to go forth, *Isa. ii. 3.* Some there were in Jerusalem that looked for redemption, yet but a few; for Anna, it should seem, had acquaintance with them all that were joint expectants with her of the Messiah, she knew where to find them, or they where to find her, and she told them all the good news, that she had seen the Lord, and it was great new; this of his birth now, as afterwards that of his resurrection. Note, Those that have got an acquaintance with Christ themselves, should do all they can to bring others acquainted with him.

therefore you should have cast the care of me upon him, and not have burdened yourselves with it. Christ is a shaft hid in his father's quiver, *Ihu*. xlix. 2. He takes care of his church likewise, and therefore let not us ever despair of its safety. (2.) *At my Father's work*; so we take it, I must be about my Father's business, and therefore could not go home so soon as you might. *Wist ye not?* Have you not already perceived that concerning me, that I have devoted myself to the service of religion, and therefore must employ myself in the affairs of it? Herein he hath left us an example, for it becomes the children of God, in conformity to Christ, to attend their heavenly Father's business, and to make all other business give way to it. This word of Christ we now think we understand very well, for he hath explained it in what he hath done, and said, it was his errand into the world, and his meat and drink in the world, to do his Father's will and finish his work; and yet at that time his parents understood not this saying, ver. 50. They did not understand what business he had to do then in the temple for his Father: They believed him to be the Messiah, that should have the throne of his Father David, but they thought that should rather bring him to the royal palace than to the temple. They understood not his prophetic office; and he was to do much of his work in that.

Lastly, Here is their return to Nazareth. This glimpse of his glory was to be short, it was now over, and he did not urge his parents either to come and settle at Jerusalem, or to settle him there, though that was the place of improvement and preferment, and where he might have the best opportunities of shewing his wisdom; but very willingly retired into his obscurity at Nazareth, where for many years he was as it were buried alive. Doubtless he came up to Jerusalem to worship at the feasts three times a year, but whether he ever went again into the temple to dispute with the doctors there we are not told; it is not improbable but he might. But here we are told,

1. That he was *subject to his parents*; though once, to shew that he was more than a man, he withdrew himself from his parents, to attend his heavenly Father's business, yet he did not, as yet, make this his constant practice, nor of many years after; but was *subject to them*, observed their orders, and went and came as they directed; and, as it should seem, worked with his father at the trade of a carpenter. Herein he hath given an example to children to be dutiful and obedient to their parents in the Lord. Being made of a woman, he was made under the law of the fifth commandment, to teach the seed of the faithful thus to approve themselves to him a faithful seed. Though his parents were poor and mean, though his father was only his supposed father, yet he was *subject to them*; though he was strong in spirit, and filled with wisdom, nay though he was the Son of God, yet was he subject to his parents; how then will they answer it, who though foolish and weak, yet are disobedient to their parents?

2. That his mother, though she did not perfectly understand her Son's sayings, yet kept them in her heart, expecting that hereafter they would be explained to her, and she would fully understand them, and know how to make use of them. However we may neglect men's sayings because they are obscure, *si non vis intelligi debis negligi*, if it be not intelligible it is not valuable, yet we must not think so of God's sayings. That which at first is dark, and we know not what to make of it, may afterwards become plain and easy; we should therefore lay it up for hereafter, see *John* ii. 22. we may find use for that another time which now we see not how it can be made useful to us. A scholar keeps those grammar rules in memory, which at present he understands not the use of, because he is told they will hereafter be of use to him; so we must do by Christ's sayings.

3. That he improved and came on to admiration, ver. 52. He increased in wisdom and stature; in the perfections of his divine nature, there could be no increase, but this is meant of his human nature, his body increased in stature and bulk, he grew in the growing age, and his soul increased in wisdom, and in all the endowments of a human soul. Though the Eternal Word was united to the human soul from his conception, yet the divinity that dwelt in him manifested itself to his humanity by degrees, *ad modum recipientis*, as the faculties of his human soul grew more and more capable, the gifts it received from the divine nature were more and more communicated. And he increased in favour with God and man, i. e. in all those graces that rendered him acceptable both to God and man. Herein Christ accommodated himself to his estate of humiliation, that as he condescended to be an infant, a child, a youth, so the image of God shone brighter in him, when he grew up to be a youth, than it did or could while he was an infant and a child. Note, Young people as they grow in stature should grow in wisdom, and then as they grow in wisdom they will grow in favour with God and man.

C H A P. III.

Nothing is related concerning our Lord Jesus from his twelfth year to his entrance on his thirtieth year, we often think it would have been a pleasure and advantage to us, if we had journals or at least annals of occurrences concerning him; but we have as much as infinite wisdom thought fit to communicate to us, and if we improve not that, neither would we have improved more, if we had had it. The great intention of the evangelists was to give us an account of the gospel of Christ, which we are to believe, and by which we hope for salvation; now that begun in the ministry and baptism of John, and therefore they hasten to give us an account of that. We could wish perhaps, that Luke had wholly passed by what was related by Matthew and Mark, and had written only what was new, as he had done in his two first chapters. But it was the will of the Spirit, that some things should be established, not only out of the mouth of two but of three witnesses, and we must not reckon it a needless repetition, nor will we do so, if we renew our meditations upon these things with suitable affections. In this chapter we have, (1.) The beginning of John's baptism, and the scope and intention of it, ver. 1—6. His exhortation to the multitude, ver. 7—9. And the particular instruction he gave to those who desired to be told their duty, ver. 10—14. (2.) The notice he gave them of the approach of the Messiah, ver. 15—18. to which is added (though it happened after what follows) the mention of his imprisonment, ver. 19—20. (3.) Christ coming to be baptized of John, and his entrance therein upon the execution of his prophetic office, ver. 21, 22. (4.) His pedigree and genealogy recorded up to Adam, ver. 23—38.

1. NOW in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea, and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene. 2. Annas and Caiaphas being the high-priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. 3. And he came into all the country about

Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins: 4. As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make his paths straight. 5. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; 6. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God. 7. Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8. Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 9. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. 10. And the people asked him, saying, what shall we do then? 11. He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none: and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. 12. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? 13. And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. 14. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages.

John's baptism introducing a new dispensation, it was requisite we should have a particular account of it. Glorious things were said of John, what a mighty favourite of heaven he should be, and what a great blessing to this earth, chap. i. 15—17. But we lost him in the deserts, and there he remains until the day of his shewing unto Israel, chap. i. 80. And now at last that day dawns, and a welcome day it was to them that waited for it more than they that waited for the morning. Observe here,

First, The date of the beginning of John's baptism, when it was that he appeared: this is here taken notice of, which was not by the other evangelists, and the truth of the thing might be confirmed by the exact fixing of the time. And it is dated,

1. By the government of the heathen, which the Jews were under, to shew that they were a conquered people, and therefore it was time for the Messiah to come to set up a spiritual kingdom and an eternal one, upon the ruins of all the temporal dignity and dominion of David and Judah.

(1.) It is dated by the reign of the Roman emperor; it was in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, the third of the twelve Cæsars, a very ill man, given to covetousness, drunkenness and cruelty (such a man is mentioned first, (saith Dr. Lightfoot) as it were, to teach us what to look for from that cruel and abominable city, wherein Satan reigned in all ages and successions) The people of the Jews, after a long struggle, were of late made a province of the empire, and were under the dominion of this Tiberius: and that country which when time was had made so great a figure and had many nations tributaries to it, in the reigns of David and Solomon, is now itself an inconsiderable despicable part of the Roman empire, and rather trampled upon than triumphed in; *en quo discordia civis perduxit miseras*! The law-giver was now departed from between Judah's feet; and as an evidence of that, their public acts are dated by the reign of the Roman emperor, and therefore now Shiloh must come.

(2.) It is dated by the governments of the viceroys that ruled in the several parts of the Holy Land under the Roman emperor, which was another badge of their servitude, for they were all foreigners, which speaks a sad change with that people whose governors used to be of themselves, *Jer. xxx. 21.* and it was their glory. *How is the gold become dim!* (1.) Pilate is here said to be the governor, president or procurator of Judea; this character is given of him by some other writers, that he was a wicked man, and one that made no conscience of a lie. He reigned ill, and at last was displaced by Vitellius president of Syria, and sent to Rome to answer for his mal-administrations. (2.) The other three are called tetrarchs, some think from the countries which they had the command of, each of them being over a fourth part of that which had been under the government of Herod the Great. Others think they are so called from the part of honour they were in the government; they had the fourth place, or were fourth-rate governors: the emperor was the first; the *proconsul* that governed a province the second, a king the third, a tetrarch the fourth. So Dr. Lightfoot.

2. By the government of the Jews among themselves, to shew that they were a corrupt people, and therefore it was time the Messiah should come to reform them, ver. 2. Annas and Caiaphas were the high-priests; God had appointed that there should be but one high-priest at a time, but here were two to serve some ill turn or other, one served one year, and the other the other, so some. One was the high-priest, and the other the Sagan as the Jews called him, to officiate for him, when he was disabled; or, as others say, one was high-priest, and represented Aaron, and that was Caiaphas; Annas the other, was Nasi, or head of the Sanhedrin, and represented Moses. But to us there is but one High priest, one Lord of all, to whom all judgment is committed.

Secondly, The original and tendency of John's baptism.

1. The original of it was from heaven; the word of the Lord came unto John, ver. 2. He received full commission and full instructions from God to do what he did; it is the same expression that is used concerning the Old Testament prophets, *Jer. i. 2.* for John was a prophet, yea more than a prophet, and in him prophecy revived, which had been long suspended. We are not told how the word of the Lord came unto John, whether by an angel as to his father, or by dream or vision, or voice, but it was to his satisfaction, and ought to be ours. John is here called the son of Zacharias, to refer us to what the angel said to his father, when he assured him he should have this son. The word of the Lord came to him in the wilderness, for those whom God fits he will find out wherever they are. As the word of the Lord is not bound in a prison, so it is not lost in a wilderness. The word of the Lord made its way to Ezekiel among the captives by the river of Chebar, and to John in the isle of Patmos. John was the son of a priest, now entering upon the thirtieth year of his age; and therefore, according to the custom of the temple, he was now to be admitted into the temple service, where he should have attended as a candidate five years before: but God had called him

him to a more honourable ministry, and therefore the Holy Ghost enrolls him here, since he was not enrolled in the archives of the temple, *John the son of Zacharias began his ministration at such a time.*

2. The scope and design of it was to bring all the people of his country off from their sins, and home to their God, *ver. 3. He came first into all the country about Jordan*, the neighbourhood wherein he resided, that part of the country which Israel took possession of first, when they entered the land of promise under Joshua's conduct, there was the banner of the gospel first displayed; John resided in the most solitary part of the country, but when the word of the Lord came to him, he quitted his deserts and came into the inhabited country. Those that are *best pleased* in their retirements must cheerfully exchange them when God calls them into places of con-course. *He came out of the wilderness into all the country* with some marks of distinction *preaching a new baptism*; not a sect or party, but a *profession* or distinguishing badge; the sign of ceremony, such as was ordinarily used among the Jews, *washing with water*, by which proselytes were sometimes admitted, or disciples to some great master; but the meaning of it was, *repentance for the remission of sins*. That is, all that submitted to his baptism,

1. Were thereby obliged to *repent of their sins*, to be sorry for what they had done amiss, and to do so no more; the former they professed, and were concerned to be sincere in their professions; the latter they promised, and were concerned to make good what they promised. He bound them not to such ceremonious observances as were imposed by the tradition of the elders, but to change their mind and change their way, to *cast away from them all their transgressions*, and to make them new hearts, and to live new lives. The design of the gospel which now began was to make men devout and pious, holy and heavenly, humble and meek, sober and chaste, just and honest, charitable and kind, and good in every relation, who had been much otherwise; and this is to *repent*.

2. They were thereby assured of the pardon of their sins, upon their repentance. As the baptism he administered bound them not to submit to the power of sin, so it sealed to them a gracious and pleadable discharge from the guilt of sin. *Turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin*; agreeing with the word of the Lord, by the Old Testament prophets, *Ezek. xviii. 30.*

Thirdly, The fulfilling of the scriptures in the ministry of John. The other evangelists had referred us to the same text that is here referred to, that of *Isaias, chap. xl. 3.* It is written in the book of the words of *Isaias the prophet*, which he heard from God, which he spoke from God, those words of his which were written for the generations to come. Among them it is found, that there should be *the voice of one crying in the wilderness*; and John is that voice, a clear distinct voice, a loud voice, an articulate one; he cries, *prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight*. John's business is to make way for the entertainment of the gospel in the hearts of the people, to bring them into such a frame and temper, as that Christ might be welcome to them, and they welcome to Christ. Luke goes further on with the quotation than Matthew and Mark had done, and applies the following words likewise to John's ministry, *ver. 5. 6. Every valley shall be filled up.* Dr. Hammond understands this as a prediction of the desolation coming upon the people of the Jews for their infidelity: the land should be made plain by the pioneers for the Roman army, and should be laid waste by it, and there should then be a visible distinction made between the impenitent on the one side and the receivers of the gospel on the other side. But it seems rather to be meant of the immediate tendency of John's ministry, and of the gospel of Christ, which that was the introduction of. (1.) The humble shall by it be enriched with grace, for every valley that lies low and moist, shall be filled and be exalted. (2.) The proud shall by it be humbled; the self-confident that stand upon their own bottom, and the self-conceited that lift up their own top, shall have contempt put upon them, for every mountain and hill shall be brought low; if they repent, they are brought to the dust; if not to the lowest hell. (3.) Sinners shall be converted to God; for the crooked ways and the crooked spirits shall be made straight; for though none can make that straight which God hath made crooked, *Ecc. vii. 13.* yet God by his grace can make that straight which sin hath made crooked. (4.) Difficulties that were hindering and discouraging in the way to heaven, shall be removed; the rough ways shall be made smooth; and they that love God's law shall have great peace, and nothing shall offend them. The gospel has made the way to heaven plain and easy to be found, smooth and easy to be walked in. (1.) The great salvation shall be more fully discovered than ever, and the discovery of it shall spread further, *ver. 6. All flesh shall see the salvation of God*; not the Jews only, but the Gentiles. All shall see it, i. e. they shall have it set before them and offered to them, and some of all sorts shall see it, i. e. enjoy it, and have the benefit of it. When way is made for the gospel into the heart, by the captivating of high thoughts and bringing them into obedience to Christ, by the levelling of the soul, and the removing of all obstructions that stand in the way of Christ and his grace, then prepare to bid the salvation of God welcome.

Fourthly, The general warnings and exhortations which he gave to those who submitted to his baptism, *ver. 7, 8, 9.* In Matthew he is said to have preached these same things to many of the Pharisees and Sadducees that came to his baptism, *Matt. iii. 7, 8, 9, 10.* but here he is said to have spoken them to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, *ver. 7.* This was the purport of his preaching to all that came to him, and he did not alter it in compliment to the Pharisees and Sadducees when they came, but dealt as plainly with them as with any other of his hearers. And as he did not flatter the great, so neither did he compliment the many, or make his court to them, but gave the same reproofs of sin and warnings of wrath to the multitude, that he did to the Sadducees and Pharisees; for if they had not the same faults they had others as bad. Now observe here,

1. That the guilty corrupted race of mankind is become a generation of vipers; not only poisoned, but poisonous; hateful to God, hating one another. This magnifies the patience of God, in continuing the race of mankind upon the earth and not destroying that nest of vipers. He did it once by water and will again by fire.

2. This generation of vipers is fairly warned to flee from the wrath to come, which is certainly before them, if they continue such, and their being a multitude will not be at all their security, for it will be neither reproof nor loss to God to cut them off. We are not only warned of his wrath, but are put into a way to escape it, if we look about us in time.

3. There is no way of fleeing from the wrath to come; but by repentance. They that submitted to the baptism of repentance, thereby evidenced that they were warned to flee from the wrath to come, and took the warning; and we by our baptism profess to have fled out of Sodom for fear of what is coming upon it.

4. Those that profess repentance are highly concerned to live like penitents, *ver. 8. Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance*, else notwithstanding your professions of repentance, you cannot escape the wrath to come. By the fruits of repentance it will be known whether it be sin-

cere or no. By the change of our way, must be evidenced the change of our mind.

5. If we be not really holy both in heart and life, our profession of religion and relation to God and his church, will stand us in no stead at all. Begin not now to frame excuses from this great duty of repentance, by saying within yourselves we have Abraham to our father, what will it avail us to be the children of godly parents, if we be not godly; to be within the pale of the church, if we be not brought into the bond of the covenant.

6. We have therefore no reason to depend upon our external privileges and professions of religion, because God has no need of us or of our services, but can effectually secure his own honour and interest without us. If we were cut off and ruined, he could raise up to himself a church out of the most unlikely; *children to Abraham even out of stones.*

7. The greater professions we make of repentance, and the greater assistance and encouragements are given us to repentance, the nearer and the closer will our destruction be, if we do not bring forth meet for repentance. Now the gospel begins to be preached, now the kingdom of heaven is at hand, now the ax is laid to the root of the tree, threatenings to the wicked and impenitent are now more terrible than before, as encouragements to the penitent are now more comfortable. Now you are upon your behaviour, look to yourselves.

8. Barren trees will be cast into the fire at length, it is the fittest place for them. Every tree that doth not bring forth fruit, good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire. If it serve not for fruit to the honour of God's grace, let it serve for fuel to the honour of his justice.

Fifthly, The particular instructions he gave to several sorts of persons, that enquired of him concerning their duty; the people, the publicans and the soldiers. Some of the Pharisees and Sadducees came to his baptism, but we do not find them asking, *What shall we do?* For they thought they knew what they had to do as well as he could tell them; or were determined to do what they pleased, whatever he told them. But the people, the publicans and the soldiers, that knew they had done amiss, and knew they should do better, and were conscious to themselves of great ignorance and unacquaintedness with the divine law, were particularly inquisitive, *What shall we do?* Note, 1. Those that are baptized must be taught, and those that have baptized them, are concerned as they have opportunity to teach them, *Matt. xviii. 19, 20.* 2. Those that profess and promise repentance in general, must evidence it by particular instances of reformation, according as their place and condition is. 3. They that would do their duty must desire to know their duty, and inquire concerning it. The first good word Paul said when he was converted was, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* These here inquire not *what shall this man do*, but *what shall we do?* what fruits meet for repentance shall we bring forth? Now John gives an answer to each according to their place and station.

1. He tells the people their duty, and that is to be charitable, *ver. 11. He that has two coats*, and consequently one to spare, let him give, or lend at least, to him that has none, to keep him warm. Perhaps he saw among his hearers some that were overloaded with clothes, while others were ready to perish in rags, and he puts those who had superfluities upon contributing to the relief of those that had not necessities. The gospel requires mercy and not sacrifice, and the design of it is to engage us to do all the good we can, food and raiment are the two supports of life, he that hath meat to spare let him give to him that is destitute of daily food, as well as he that has clothes to spare: what we have we are but stewards of, and must use it accordingly as our master directs.

2. He tells the publicans their duty, the collectors of the emperor's revenue, *ver. 13. Exact no more than that which is appointed you.* They must do justice between the government and the merchant, and not oppress the people in levying the taxes, or any way make them heavier or more burdensome than the law had made them. They must not think that because it was their office to take care that the people did not defraud the prince, they might therefore by the power they had bear hard upon the people; as those that have never so little a branch of power are apt to abuse it: no, keep to your book of rates, and reckon it enough that you collect for Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and do not enrich yourselves by taking more. The public revenues must be applied to the public service and not to gratify the avarice of private persons. Observe, He doth not direct the publicans to quit their places and to go no more to the receipt of custom, the employment is in itself lawful and necessary, but let them be just and honest in it.

3. He tells the soldiers their duty, *ver. 14.* Some think these soldiers were of the Jewish nation and religion, others think they were Romans; for it was not likely either that the Jews would serve the Romans, or the Romans trust the Jews in their garrisons in their own nation; and then it is an early instance of Gentiles embracing the gospel and submitting to it. Military men seldom seem inclined to religion, yet these submitted even to the Baptist's strict profession, and desired to receive the word of command from him, *What must we do?* Those who more than other men have their lives in their hands, and are in death's often, are concerned to inquire what they shall do that they may be found in peace. In answer to this enquiry John doth not bid them lay down their arms and desert the service; but cautions them against the sins that soldiers were commonly guilty of; for this is fruit meet for repentance, to keep ourselves from our iniquity.

(1.) They must not be injurious to the people among whom they were quartered, and over whom indeed they were set, *do violence to no man.* Your business is to keep the peace, and prevent men's doing violence to one another, but do not you do violence to any: *shake no man*, so the word signifies: do not put people into fear; for the sword of war, as well as that of justice, is to be a terror only to evil-doers, but a protection to those that dwell. Be not rude in your quarters; force not money from people by frightening them. Shed not the blood of war in peace; offer no incivility either to man or woman; nor have any hand in the barbarous devastations that armies sometimes make. Nor must they accuse any falsely to the government, thereby to make themselves formidable and get bribes. (2.) They must not be injurious to their fellow-soldiers; for some think that caution, not to accuse falsely, has special reference to them: be not forward to complain one of another to your superior officers, that you may be revenged on those you have a pique against, or undermine those above you and get into their places. Do not oppress any, so some think the word here signifies, as used by the LXX. in several passages of the Old Testament. (3.) They must not begin to mutiny nor contend with their generals about their pay, *be content with your wages.* While you have what you have agreed for, do not murmur that it is no more. It is discontent with what they have that makes men oppressive and injurious: they that never think they have enough themselves, will not stick at any the most irregular practices to make it more by defrauding others. It is a rule to all servants that they be content with their wages, for they that indulge themselves in discontents expose themselves to many temptations, and it is wisdom to make the best of that which is.

15. ¶ And as the people were in expectation, and all

all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not; 16. John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water: but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: 17. Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. 18. And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people. 19. ¶ But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, 20. Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

We are now drawing near to the appearance of our Lord Jesus publicly; the sun will not be long after the morning-star. We are here told,

First, How the people took occasion from the ministry and baptism of John to think of the Messiah, and to think of him as at the door, as now come. Thus the way of the Lord was prepared, and people were prepared to bid Christ welcome; for when men's expectations are raised, that which they are in expectation of becomes doubly acceptable. Now when they observed what an excellent doctrine John Baptist preached, what a divine power went along with it, and what a tendency it had to reform the world,

1. They began presently to consider that now was the time for the Messiah to appear; the sceptre was departed from Judah, for they had no king but Cesar, nay and the lawgiver too was gone from between his feet, for Herod had lately slain the Sanhedrin; Daniel's seventy weeks were now expiring, and therefore it was but three or four years after this that they looked that the kingdom of heaven should appear presently, Luke xix. 11. Never did the corrupt state of the Jews more need a reformation, nor their distressed state more need a deliverance than now.

2. Their next thought was, Is not this he that should come? All thinking men mused or reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether he were the Christ or not. He had indeed nothing of that external pomp and grandeur in which they generally expected the Messiah to appear, but his life was holy and strict, his preaching powerful and with authority, and therefore why may we not think him to be the Messiah, and that he will shortly throw off his disguise and appear in more glory? Note, That which puts people upon considering, reasoning with themselves, prepares the way for Christ.

Secondly, How John disowned all pretensions to the honour of being himself the Messiah, but confirmed them in their expectations of him that really was the Messiah, ver. 16, 17. John's office as a crier or herald, was to give notice that the kingdom of God and the King of that kingdom was at hand; and therefore when he had told all manner of people severally what they must do, you must do this and you must do that; he tells them one thing more which they must all do, they must expect the Messiah now shortly to appear. And this serves as an answer to their musings and debates concerning himself. Though he knew not their thoughts, yet in declaring this he answered them.

1. He declares the utmost he could do was to baptize them with water; he had no access to the Spirit, nor could command that or work upon that; he could only exhort them to repent; and assured them of forgiveness upon repentance; he could not work repentance in them nor confer remission on them.

2. He consigns them and turns them over as it were to Jesus Christ, for whom he was sent to prepare the way, and to whom he was ready to transfer all the interest he had in the affections of the people, and would have them no longer to debate whether John was the Messiah or no, but to look for him that was really so.

1. John owns the Messiah to have a greater excellency than he had, and that he was in all things preferable to him; he is one the latchet of whose shoe he doth not think himself worthy to unloose; he doth not think himself worthy to be the meanest of his servants, to help him on and off with his shoes. John was a prophet, yea more than a prophet, more so than any of the Old Testament prophets; but Christ was a prophet more than John, for it was both by the Spirit of Christ and of the grace of Christ, that all the prophets prophesied, and John among the rest, 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. This was a great truth which John came to preach, but the manner of his expressing it speaks his humility, and in it he not only doth justice to the Lord Jesus but doth him honour: He is one I am not worthy to approach or draw nigh to, no not as a servant. Thus highly doth it always become us to speak of Christ and thus humbly of ourselves.

2. He owns him to have a greater energy than he had. He is mightier than I, and doth that which I cannot do, both for the comfort of the faithful and for the terror of hypocrites and dissemblers. They thought a wonderful power went along with John, but what was that compared with the power which Jesus would come clothed with? (1.) John can do no more but baptize with water, in token of this, that they ought to purify and cleanse themselves; but Christ can and will baptize with the Holy Ghost, he can give the Spirit to cleanse and purify the heart, not only as water washes off the dirt on the outside, but as fire purges out the dross that is within, and melts down the metal that it may be cast into a new mould. (2.) John can only preach a distinguishing doctrine, and by word and sin separate between the precious and the vile; but Christ hath his fan in his hand, with which he can and will perfectly part between the wheat and the chaff; he will thoroughly purge his floor, it is his own, and therefore he will purge it, and will cast out of his church the unbelieving impenitent Jews, and confirm in his church all that faithfully follow him. (3.) John can only speak comfort to those that receive the gospel, and like other prophets, say to the righteous that it shall be well with them; but Jesus Christ will give them comfort. John can only promise them they shall be safe, but Christ will make them so, he will gather the wheat into his garner: good, serious, solid people he will gather now into his church on earth, which shall be made up of such, and he will shortly gather them into his church in heaven, where they shall be for ever sheltered. (4.) John can only threaten hypocrites, and tell the barren trees that they shall be hewn down and cast into the fire; but Christ can execute that threatening; those that are as chaff, light and vain and worthless, he will burn with fire unquenchable. John refers here to Mal. iii. 18.—iv. 1, 2. Then when the floor is purged, ye shall return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, for the day comes that shall burn as an oven.

The evangelist concludes his account of John's preaching with an *et cetera*, ver. 18. Many other things in his exhortation preached he unto his

people, which are not recorded. (1.) John was an affectionate preacher; he was *παρηγορητικὸς*, exhorting, beseeching, he pressed things home upon his hearers, followed his doctrine close, as one in earnest. (2.) He was a practical preacher, much of his preaching was exhortation, quickening them to their duty and directing them in it, and not amusing them with matters of nice speculation. (3.) He was a popular preacher, though he had Scribes and Pharisees, men of polite learning attending his ministry, and Sadducees, men of free thought, as they pretended, yet he addressed himself to the people, *πρὸς τοὺς λαοὺς* to the *laity*, and accommodated himself to their capacity, as promising himself best success among them. (4.) He was an evangelical preacher, for so the word here used signifies, *εὐαγγελιστὴς*, he preached the gospel to the people; in all his exhortations he directed people to Christ, and excited and encouraged their expectations of him. When we press duty upon people, we must direct them to Christ both for righteousness and strength. (5.) He was a copious preacher; many other things he preached, *πολλὰ μὲν καὶ ἕτερα*, many things and different. He preached a great deal, shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God; and he varied in his preaching, that those who were not reached, and touched, and wrought upon by one truth, might be by another.

Thirdly, How a full stop was put to John's preaching, when he was in the midst of his usefulness, going on thus successfully, he was imprisoned by the malice of Herod, ver. 19, 20. Herod the tetrarch being reproved by him, not only for living in incest with his brother Philip's wife, but for the many other evils which Herod had done: for those that are wicked in one instance are commonly so in many others; he could not bear it; but contracted an antipathy to him for his plain dealing, and added this wickedness to all the rest, which was indeed above all, that he shut up John in prison; put that burning and shining light under a bushel: Because he could not bear his reproofs, others should be deprived of the benefit of his instructions and counsels. Some little good he might do to those who had access to him, when he was in prison; but nothing to what he might have done, if he had had liberty to go about all the country as he had done. We cannot think of Herod's doing this, without the greatest compassion and lamentation; nor of God's permitting it, without admiring the depth of the divine counsels, which we cannot account for; must he be silenced, who is the voice of one crying in the wilderness? Must such a preacher be shut up in prison who ought to have been set up in the courts of the temple? But thus the faith of his disciples must be tried, the unbelief of those who reject him must be punished. Thus he must be Christ's forerunner in suffering as well as preaching, and thus having been for about a year and half preparing people for Christ, he must now give way to him, and the sun being risen, the morning-star must of course disappear.

21. Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened: 22. And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased. 23. And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli, 24. Which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi, which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Janna, which was the son of Joseph, 25. Which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Amos, which was the son of Naum, which was the son of Esli, which was the son of Nagge, 26. Which was the son of Matath, which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Semei, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Judah, 27. Which was the son of Joanna, which was the son of Rhelai, which was the son of Zorobabel, which was the son of Salathiel, which was the son of Neri: 28. Which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Addi, which was the son of Cosam, which was the son of Elmodam, which was the son of Er, 29. Which was the son of Jose, which was the son of Eliezer, which was the son of Jorim, which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi, 30. Which was the son of Simeon, which was the son of Juda, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Jonan, which was the son of Eliakim, 31. Which was the son of Melca, which was the son of Menan, which was the son of Mattatha, which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David, 32. Which was the son of Jesse, which was the son of Obed, which was the son of Booz, which was the son of Salmon, which was the son of Naasson, 33. Which was the son of Aminadab, which was the son of Aram, which was the son of Esrom, which was the son of Phares, which was the son of Juda, 34. Which was the son of Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham, which was the son of Thara, which was the son of Nachor, 35. Which was the son of Saruch, which was the son of Ragau, which was the son of Phalec, which was the son of Heber, which was the son of Sala, 36. Which was the son of Cainan, which was the son of Arphaxad, which was the son of Sem, which was the son of Noe, which was the son of Lamech, 37. Which was the son of Mathusala, which was the son of Enoch, which was the son of Jared, which was the son of Maleleel, which was the son of Cainan, 38. Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.

The evangelist mentioned John's imprisonment before Christ's being baptized, though it was near a year after it, because he would finish the story of John's ministry, and then introduce that of Christ. Now here we

First,

First, A short account of Christ's baptism, which had been more fully related by St. Matthew. Jesus came to be baptized of John, and he was so, *ver.* 21, 22.

1. It is here said, that *when all the people were baptized, then Jesus was baptized*; all that were then present; Christ would be baptized last, among the common people, and in the rear of them; thus he humbled himself and made himself of no reputation, as one of the least, nay, as less than the least. He saw what multitudes were hereby prepared to receive him, and then he appeared.

2. Notice is here taken of Christ's *praying* when he was baptized, which was not in Matthew; being baptized and *praying*. He did not *confess* sin as others did, for he had none to confess; but he *prayed* as others did, for he would thus keep up communion with his Father. Note, The inward and spiritual grace, which sacraments are the outward and visible signs of, must be fetched in by prayer; and therefore prayer must always accompany them. We have reason to think that Christ now prayed for this manifestation of God's favour to him, which immediately followed; he prayed for the discovery of his Father's favour to him, and the descent of the Spirit. What was promised to Christ, he must obtain by prayer; *Ask of me, and I will give thee, &c.* thus he would put an honour upon prayer, would tie us to it, and encourage us in it.

3. When he prayed, *the heaven was opened*; he that by his power parted the waters, to make a way through them to Canaan, now by his power parted the air, another fluid element, to open a correspondence with the heavenly Canaan. Thus was there opened to Christ, and by him to us, a new and living way into the holiest; sin had shut up heaven, but Christ's prayer opened it again. Prayer is an ordinance that opens heaven; knock and it shall be opened unto you.

4. The Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, our Lord Jesus was now to receive greater measures of the Spirit than before, to qualify him for his prophetic office, *Isa.* lxi. 1. When he begins to preach, *the Spirit of the Lord is upon him*. Now this is here expressed by a sensible evidence for his encouragement in his work, and for the satisfaction of John Baptist; for he was told before, that by this sign it should be notified to him, which was the Christ. Dr. Lightfoot suggests, that the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, that he might be revealed to be a personal substance, and not merely an operation of the Godhead: And thus (saith he) was made a full, clear and sensible demonstration of the Trinity, as the beginning of the gospel; and very fitly is this done at Christ's baptism, who was to make the ordinance of baptism a badge of the profession of that faith, in the doctrine of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

5. There came a voice from heaven, from God the Father, from the excellent glory, so it is expressed, *2 Pet.* i. 17. *Thou art my beloved Son*. Here and in Mark it is expressed as spoken to Christ; in Matthew, as spoken of him, *this is my beloved Son*. It comes all to one, it was intended to be a notification to John, and as such properly expressed by *this is my beloved Son*; and likewise an answer to his prayer, and so it is most fitly expressed by *thou art*. It was foretold concerning the Messiah, *I will be his Father and he shall be my Son*, *2 Sam.* vii. 14. *I will make him my first-born*, *Psal.* lxxxix. 27. That he should be God's elect, in whom his soul delighted, *Isa.* xlii. 1, and accordingly it is here declared, *Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*.

Secondly, A long account of Christ's pedigree, which had been more briefly related by St. Matthew. Here is,

1. His age. He now began to be about thirty years of age. So old Joseph was when he stood before Pharaoh, *Gen.* xli. 46. David when he began to reign, *2 Sam.* v. 4. and at this age the priests were to enter upon the full execution of their office, *Numb.* iv. 3. Dr. Lightfoot thinks it is plain by the manner of expression here, that he was just twenty-nine years old complete, and entering upon his thirtieth year in the month Tisri; after this he lived three years and a half, and died when he was thirty-two years old and a half. Three years and a half, the time of Christ's ministry, is a period of time very remarkable in scripture; three years and six months the heavens were shut up in Elijah's time, *Luke* iv. 25. *Jam.* v. 17. This was the half week in which the Messiah was to confirm the covenant, *Dan.* ix. 27. This period is expressed in the prophetic writings by a time, times, and half a time, *Dan.* xii. 7. *Rev.* xii. 14. and by forty-two months, and a thousand two hundred and threescore days, *Rev.* xi. 2, 3. where it is the time fixed for the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, in conformity to Christ's preaching in his humiliation just so long.

2. His pedigree, *ver.* 23, &c. Matthew had given us somewhat of this, he goes no higher than Abraham, but Luke brings it as high as Adam; Matthew designed to shew that Christ was the son of Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth are blessed, and that he was heir to the throne of David, and therefore he begins with Abraham, and brings the genealogy down to Jacob, who was the father of Joseph, an heir male of the house of David; but Luke designing to shew that Christ was the seed of the woman that should break the serpent's head, traceth his pedigree upwards as high as Adam, and begins it with Eli or Heli, who was the father, not of Joseph but of the virgin Mary. And some suggest, that the supply which our translators all along insert here is not right, and that it should not be read which, i. e. which Joseph was the son of Heli, but which Jesus; he was the son of Joseph, of Eli, of Matthat, and he, i. e. Jesus, was the son of Seth, of Adam, of God, *ver.* 38. The difference between the two Evangelists in the genealogy of Christ, has been a stumbling-block to infidels that cavil at the word; but such a one as has been removed by the labours of learned men, both in the early ages of the church and in latter times, to which we refer ourselves. Matthew draws the pedigree from Solomon, whose natural line ending in Jeconias, the legal right was transferred to Salathiel, who was of the house of Nathan, another son of David, which line Luke here pursues and so leaves out all the kings of Judah. It is well for us that our salvation doth not depend upon our being able to solve all these difficulties, nor is the divine authority of the gospels at all weakened by them; for the Evangelists are not supposed to write these genealogies either of their own knowledge or by divine inspiration, but to have copied them out of the authentic records of the genealogies among the Jews, the herald's books, which therefore they were obliged to follow; and in them they found the pedigree of Jacob the father of Joseph, to be as it is set down in Matthew; and the pedigree of Heli the father of Mary, to be as it is set down here in Luke; and this is the meaning of *de impugneto, ver.* 23. not as it was supposed, referring only to Joseph, but *unifancitum est lege*, as it is entered into the books, as we find it upon record, by which it appeared that Jesus was both by father's and mother's side the son of David; witness this extract out of their own records, which any one might at that time have liberty to compare with the original, and further the evangelist needed not to go, nay, had they varied from that they had not gained their point. And its not being contradicted at that time is satisfaction enough to us now that it is a true copy, as it is further worthy our observing that when those records of the Jewish genealogies had continued thirty or forty years after these extracts out of them, long enough to justify the evangelists therein, they were all lost and destroyed with the Jewish state and nation, for now there was no more occasion for them.

Here is one difficulty occurs between Abraham and Noah which gives us some perplexity, *ver.* 35, 36. Sala is said to be the son of Cainan, and he the son of Arphaxad, whereas Sala was the son of Arphaxad, *Gen.* x. 24.—xi. 12. and there is no such a man as Cainan found there. But as to that it is sufficient to say that the Seventy Interpreters, who before our Saviour's time translated the Old Testament into Greek, for reasons best known to themselves inserted that Cainan; and St. Luke writing among the *Hellenist Jews* was obliged to make use of that translation, and therefore to take it as he found it.

The genealogy concludes with this, *who was the son of Adam, the Son of God*. (1.) Some refer it to Adam, he was in a peculiar manner the Son of God, being more immediately than any of his offspring the offspring of God by creation. (2.) Others refer it to Christ, and so make the last words of this genealogy to speak his divine and human nature: He was both the son of Adam and the Son of God, that he might be a proper mediator between God and the sons of Adam, and might bring the sons of Adam to be through him the sons of God.

CHAP. IV.

We left Christ newly baptized, and owned by a voice from heaven, and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him. Now in this chapter we have, 1. A further preparation of him for his public ministry by his being tempted in the wilderness, which we had the same account of before in Matthew as we have here. (2.) His entrance upon his public work in Galilee, ver. 14, 15. particularly, (1.) At Nazareth, the city where he had been bred up, ver. 16—30. which we had an account of before in Matthew. (2.) At Capernaum, where having preached to admiration, ver. 31, 33. he cast the devil out of a man that was possessed, ver. 33—37. Cured Peter's mother-in-law of a fever, ver. 38, 39. And many others that were sick and possessed, ver. 40, 41. And then went and did the same in other cities of Galilee, ver. 42—44.

1. **A**ND Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2. Being forty days tempted of the devil; and in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterwards hungered; 3. And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it may be made bread. 4. And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, that man shall not live by bread alone, but every word of God. 5. And the devil taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it. 7. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. 8. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 9. And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence. 10. For it is written He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee. 11. And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 12. And Jesus answering, said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 13. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

The last words of the foregoing chapter, that Jesus was the son of Adam, speak him to be the seed of the woman; being so we have him here according to the promise breaking the serpent's head, baffling and foiling the devil in all his temptations, who by one temptation had baffled and foiled our first parents. Thus in the beginning of the war he made reprisals upon him, and conquered the conqueror.

In this story of Christ's temptation observe, First, How he was prepared and fitted for it. He that designed him the trial furnished him accordingly; for though we know not what exercises may be before us, nor what encounters we may be reserved for, Christ did, and was provided accordingly; and God doth for us and we hope will provide accordingly.

1. He was full of the Holy Ghost, who had descended on him like a dove, had now greater measures of the gifts, graces and comforts of the Holy Ghost than ever before. Note, Those are well armed against the strongest temptations that are full of the Holy Ghost.

2. He was newly returned from Jordan, where he was baptized and owned by a voice from heaven to be the beloved Son of God, and thus he was prepared for this combat. Note, When we have had the most comfortable communion with God, and the clearest discoveries of his favour to us, we may expect that Satan will set upon us; the richest ship is the pirate's prize; and that God will suffer him to do so that the power of his grace may be manifested.

3. He was led by the spirit into the wilderness, by the good Spirit, who led him as the champion into the field to fight the enemy that he was sure to conquer. His being led into the wilderness, (1.) Gave some advantage to the tempter, for there he had him alone, no friend with him by whose prayers and advice he might be assisted in the hour of temptation. *No to him that is alone!* He might give Satan advantage who knew his own strength, we may not who know our own weakness. (2.) He gained some advantage to himself during his forty days fasting in the wilderness, we may suppose that he was wholly taken up in a proper meditation, and in the consideration of his own undertaking and the work he had before him, that he spent all this time in immediate, intimate converse with his Father, as Moses in the mount, without any diversion, distraction, or interruption. Of all the days of Christ's life in the flesh, these seem to come nearest to the angelic perfection and the heavenly life, and this prepared him for Satan's assaults, and hereby he was fortified against them.

4. He continued fasting, *ver.* 2. *In those days he did eat nothing*. This fast was altogether miraculous, like those of Moses and Elijah, and shews him

him to be like them, a prophet sent of God; it is probable it was in the wilderness of Horeb, the same wilderness in which Moses and Elijah fasted. A. by retiring into the wilderness he shewed himself perfectly indifferent to the world, so by this fasting he shewed himself perfectly indifferent to the body, and Satan cannot easily take hold of those who are thus loosened from and lead o the world and the flesh. The more we keep under the body and bring it into subjection, the less advantage Satan has against us.

S. coudly, How he was assaulted by one temptation after another, and how he defeated the design of the tempter in every assault, and became more than a conqueror. During the forty days he was tempted of the devil, ver. 2. not by any inward suggestions, for the prince of this world had nothing in Christ by which to inject any such, but by outward solicitations, perhaps in the likeness of a serpent, as he tempted our first parents. But at the end of the forty days he came nearer him, and did as it were close with him when he perceived that he was an hungered, ver. 2. Probably our Lord Jesus then began to look about among the trees to see if he could find any thing that was eatable, from whence the devil took occasion to make the following proposal to him.

1. He tempted him to distrust his Father's care of him and to set up for himself, and shift for provision for himself in such a way as his father had not appointed for him, ver. 3. *If thou be the Son of God*, as the voice from heaven declared, *command this stone to be made bread.* (1.) I counsel thee to do it, for God if he be thy Father has forgotten thee, and it will be long enough before he sends either ravens or angels to feed thee. If we begin to think of being our own carvers, and of living by our own forecast without depending upon divine providence, of getting wealth by the power of our hands, we must look upon it as a temptation of Satan's and reject it accordingly; it is Satan's counsel to think of an independency upon God. (2.) I challenge thee to do it if thou canst, if thou dost not do it I will say thou art not the Son of God; for John Baptist said lately, *That God is able of stones to raise up children to Abraham*, which is the greater: thou therefore hast not the power of the Son of God, if thou dost not of stones make bread for thyself when thou needest it, which is the lesser. Thus was God himself tempted in the wilderness; *Can he furnish a table? Can he give bread?* Psal. lxxxviii. 19. 20.

Now, 1. Christ yielded not to the temptation: he would not turn that stone into bread, no, not though he was hungry; (1.) Because he would not do what Satan bid him do, for that would have looked as if there had been indeed a compact between him and the prince of the devils. Note, We must not do any thing that looks like giving place to the devil; miracles were wrought for the confirming of faith, and the devil had no faith to be confirmed, and therefore he would not do it for him. He did his signs in the presence of his disciples, John xx. 30. and particularly the beginning of his miracles, turning water into wine, which he did that his disciples might believe on him, John ii. 11. but here in the wilderness he had no disciples with him. (2.) He wrought miracles for the ratification of his doctrine, and therefore till he began to preach he would not begin to work miracles. (3.) He would not work miracles for himself and his own supply, lest he should seem impatient of hunger, whereas he came not to please himself but to suffer grief and that grief among others; and because he would shew that he pleased not himself, he would rather turn water into wine for the credit and convenience of his friends than stones into bread for his own necessary supply. (4.) He would reserve the proof of his being the Son of God for hereafter, and would rather be upbraided by Satan with being weak and not able to do it, than be persuaded by Satan to do that which it was not fit for him to do; thus he was upbraided by his enemies as if he could not save himself and come down from the cross, when he could have come down, but would not, because it was not fit he should. (5.) He would not do any thing that looked like distrust of his Father, or acting separately from him, or any thing disagreeable to his present state. Being in all things made like unto his brethren, he would, like other the children of God, live in a dependence upon the divine providence and promise, and trust him either to send him a supply into the wilderness or lead him to a city of habitation where there was a supply, as he used to do, Psal. cvii. 5, 6, 7. and in the mean time would support him though he was hungry, as he had done these forty days past.

3. He returned a scripture answer to it, ver. 4. *It is written.* This is the first word recorded as spoken by Christ after his instalment in his prophetic office, and it is a quotation out of the Old Testament to shew that he came to assert and maintain the authority of the scripture as uncontrollable, even by Satan himself: And though he had the spirit without measure, and had a doctrine of his own to preach and a religion to found, yet it agreed with Moses and the prophets, whose writings he therefore lays down as a rule to himself, and recommends to us a reply to Satan and his temptations; the word of God is our sword, and faith in that word is our shield; we should therefore be mighty in the scripture and go in that might, go forth and go on in our spiritual warfare. *Know what is written*, for it is for our learning, for our use. The text of scripture he makes use of is quoted from Deut. viii. 3. *Man shall not live by bread alone; I need not turn the stone into the bread, for God can send manna for my nourishment as he did for Israel: man can live by every word of God, i. e. by whatever God will appoint that he shall live.* How had Christ lived, lived comfortably these forty days last past? not by bread, but by the word of God, by meditation upon that word and communion with it, and with God in and by it; and in like manner he could live yet, though now he began to be an hungered. God has many ways of providing for his people without the ordinary means of subsistence, and therefore he is not at any time to be distrusted, but at all times to be depended upon in the way of duty. If meat be wanting God can take away the appetite, or give such degrees of patience as will enable a man even to laugh at destruction and famine, Job v. 22. or make pulse and water more nourishing than all the portion of the king's meat, Dan. i. 12, 13. and enable his people to rejoice in the Lord, when the fig-tree doth not blossom, Hab. i. 12, 13. She was an active believer that said she had made many a meal's meat of the promises when she wanted bread.

2. He tempted him to accept from him the kingdom, which as the Son of God, he expected to receive from his Father, and to do him homage for it, ver. 5, 7, 8. This evangelist put this temptation second which Matthew had put last, and which it should seem was really the last; but Luke was full of it as the blackest and most violent, and therefore hastened to it. In the devil's tempting our first parents he represented to them the forbidden fruit, first as good for food and then as pleasant to the eyes, and they were overpowered by both these charms: Satan here first tempted Christ to turn the stones into bread, which would be good for food, and then shewed him the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, which was pleasant to the eyes; but in both these he overpowered Satan, and perhaps with an eye to that Luke changed the order. Now observe;

2. How Satan managed this temptation to prevail with Christ, to become a tributary to him, and to receive his kingdom by delegation from him.

(1.) He gave him a prospect of the kingdom of the world in a moment of time, an airy representation of them such as he thought most likely to strike the fancy and seem a real prospect; and to humour the thing, he took him up

for this purpose into a high mountain; and because we next after the temptation find Christ on the other side Jordan, some think it probable that it was to the top of Pisgah that the devil took him, from whence Moses had a sight of Canaan. And that it was but a phantasm that the devil here presented our Saviour with, as the prince of the power of the air; is confirmed by that circumstance which Luke here takes notice of, that it was done in a moment of time: whereas, if a man takes a prospect of but one country he must do it successively, must turn himself round and take a view first of one part and then of another. Thus the devil thought to impose upon our Saviour with a fallacy, a *deceptio visus*; and by making him believe that he could shew him all the kingdoms of the world, would draw him into an opinion that he could give him all those kingdoms.

(2.) He boldly alleged, that these kingdoms were all delivered to him, that he had power to dispose of them and all their glory, and to give it to whomsoever he would, ver. 6. Some think herein he pretended to be an angel of light, and that as one of the angels that was set over the kingdoms, he had bought out or fought out all the rest, and so was intrusted with the disposal of them all; and in God's name would give them him, knowing they were designed for him: but clogged with this condition, that he should fall down and worship him; which a good angel would have been so far from demanding, that he would not have admitted it, no, not upon shewing much greater things than these, as appears, Rev. xiv. 10. xxii. 9. But I rather take it, that he claimed this power as Satan, and as delivered to him, not by the Lord, but by the kings and people of these kingdoms, who gave their power and honour to the devil, Eph. ii. 2. Hence he is called the god of this world, and the prince of this world. It was promised to the Son of God that he should have the heathen for his inheritance, Psal. ii. 8. Why faith the devil the heathen are mine, are my subjects and votaries; but, however, they shall be thine, I will give them thee upon condition that thou worship me for them, and say they are the rewards which I have given thee, as others have done before thee, Hos. ii. 12. and consent to have and hold them by, from, and under me.

(3.) He demanded of him homage and adoration. *If thou wilt worship me, all shall be thine*, ver. 7. (1.) He would have him worship him himself; perhaps he doth not mean so as never to worship God, but let him worship him in conjunction with God; for the devil knows, if he can but once come in a partner, he shall soon be sole proprietor. (2.) He would induce with him, that when according to the promise made to him, he had possession of the kingdoms of this world, he should make no alteration of religion in them, but permit and suffer the nations as they had done hitherto to sacrifice to devils, 1 Cor. x. 20. That he should still keep up diemon worship in the world, and then let him take all the power and glory of the kingdoms if he pleased. Let who will take the wealth and grandeur of this earth, Satan has all he would have, if he can but have men's hearts and affections and adorations; can but work in the children of disobedience, for then he effectually devours them.

2. How our Lord Jesus triumphed over this temptation. He gave it a peremptory repulse, rejected it with abhorrence, ver. 8. *Get thee behind me, Satan, I cannot bear the mention of it; What! worship the enemy of God, whom I came to serve; and of man, whom I came to save? No, I will never do it; such a temptation as this was not to be reasoned with, but immediately refused; it was presently knocked on the head with one word, It is written Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God; and not only so, but him only, him and no other, and therefore Christ will not worship Satan, nor when he has the kingdoms of the world delivered to him by his father, as he expects shortly to have, will he suffer any remains of the worship of the devil to continue in them: No, it shall be perfectly rooted out and abolished wherever his gospel come; He will make no composition with him: polytheism and idolatry must go down, as Christ's kingdom gets up: Men must be turned from the power of Satan unto God, from the worship of devils, to the worship of the only living and true God; this is the great divine law that Christ will re-establish among men, and by his holy religion reduce men to the obedience of, That God only is to be served and worshipped; and therefore whoever set up any creature as the object of religious worship, though it were a saint, or an angel, or the virgin Mary herself, they directly thwart Christ's design, and relapse into heathenism.*

3. He tempted him to be his own murderer, in a presumptuous confidence of his Father's protection, such as he had no warrant for. Observe,

1. What he designed in this temptation. *If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down*, ver. 4. (1.) He would have him seek for a new proof of his being the Son of God, as if that which his Father had given him by the voice from heaven, and the descent of the spirit upon him were not sufficient, which would have been a dishonour to God, as if he had not chosen the most proper way of giving him the assurance of it; and it would have argued a distrust of the Spirit's dwelling in him, which was the great and most convincing proof to himself of his being the Son of God, Heb. i. 8, 9. (2.) He would have him seek a new method of proclaiming and publishing this to the world. The devil in effect suggests, that it was in an obscure corner that he was attested to be the son of God, among a company of ordinary people who attended John's baptism, that his honours were proclaimed; but if he would now declare from the pinnacle of the temple, among all the great people who attend the temple service, that he was the Son of God, and then for proof of it, throw himself down unhurt, he would presently be received by every body as a messenger sent from heaven. Thus Satan would have him seek honours of his deviling, in contempt of those which God had put on him, and manifested himself in the temple at Jerusalem; whereas God designed he should be more manifest among John's penitents, to whom his doctrine would be more welcome than to the priests. (3.) It is likely he had some hopes, that though he could not throw him down to do him the least mischief, yet if he would but throw himself down the fall might be his death, and then he should have got him finely out of the way.

2. How he backed and enforced this temptation. He suggested, *It is written*, ver. 10. Christ had quoted scripture against him, and he thought he would be quite against him, and would shew that he could quote scripture as well as he. It has been usual with heretics and seducers to pervert scripture, and to press the sacred writings into the service of the world of wickedness. *He shall give his angels charge over thee*, if thou be his Son, and in their hands they shall bear thee up. And now he was upon the pinnacle of the temple, he might especially expect this ministration of angels; for if he were the Son of God, the temple was the proper place for him to be in, Luke ii. 41. and if any place under the sun had a guard of angels constantly, it must needs be that, Psal. lxxviii. 17. It is true, God had promised the protection of angels to encourage us to trust him, not to tempt him; as far as the promise of God's presence with us, so far as the promise of the angels ministration goes, but no further; they shall keep thee when thou goest on the round, where thy way lies, but not if thou wilt presume to fly in the air.

3. How he was baffled and defeated in the temptation, ver. 12. Christ quoted, Deut. vi. 16. where it is said, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*, by desiring a sign for the proof of divine revelation, when he has already given that which is sufficient; for so Israel did when they tempted God in the wilderness, saying, *He gave us water out of the rock, but can he give flesh*

also? This Christ would be guilty of, if he should say, he did indeed prove to be the Son of God, by sending the Spirit upon me, which is the *greater*; but can he also give us angels as a sign concerning me, which is the *lesser*?

Thirdly, What was the result and issue of this combat? ver. 13. Our victorious Redeemer kept his ground and came off a conqueror, not for himself only, but for us also.

1. The devil emptied his quiver; he *ended all the temptations*; Christ gave him opportunity to try and do all he could against him, he let him try all his force and yet defeated him. Did Christ suffer being tempted, till all the temptations was ended? and will not we expect also to pass all our trials, to go through the *hour of temptation* assigned us?

2. He then quitted the field, he *departed from them*, he saw it was to no purpose to attack him; he had *nothing in him* for his fiery darts to fall upon; he had no blind side, no weak or unguarded part in his wall, and therefore gave up the chase. Note, If we resist the devil he will flee from us.

3. Yet he continued his malice against him, and departed with a resolution to attack him again; he departed but for a season, *ἄρξαι ἀναγὰς*, till a season, or till the season when he was again to be loose upon him, not as a tempter to draw him to sin, and to strike at his head, which was what he now aimed at, and was wholly defeated in it; but a prosecutor to bring him to suffer by Judas, and other the wicked instruments whom he employed, and so to *bruise his heel*, which it was told him, Gen. iii. 15. he should have to do, and would do, though it would be the breaking of his own head. He departed not till that season came which Christ calls the *power of darkness*, Luke xii. 53, and when the prince of this world would again come, John xiv. 30.

14. ¶ And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. 15. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. 16. ¶ And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and as his custom was he went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and stood up for to read. 17. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias: and when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18. The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. 19. To preach the acceptable year of the LORD. 20. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down: and the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21. And he began to say unto them, This day is the scripture fulfilled in your ears. 22. And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son? 23. And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country. 24. And he said, Verily, I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. 25. But I tell you of a truth, Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land: 26. But unto none of them was Elias sent save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. 27. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet: and none of them were cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian. 28. And all they in the synagogue when they heard these things were filled with wrath. 29. And rose up and thrust him out of the city, and led him into the brow of the hill (whereon their city was built) that they might cast him down headlong. 30. But he passing through the midst of them, went his way.

After Christ had vanquished the evil spirit, he made it appear how much he was under the influence of the good Spirit; and having defended himself against the devil's assaults, he now begins to act *offensively*; and to make those attacks upon him by his preaching and miracles, which he could not resist or repel. Observe.

1. What is here said in general of his preaching and the entertainment it met with in Galilee, a remote part of the country distant from Jerusalem, it was a part of Christ's humiliation that he began his ministry there. But (1.) Thither he came *in the power of the Spirit*: That same Spirit that qualified him for the exercises of his prophetic office, strongly inclined him to it. He was not to wait for a call from men, for he had light and life in himself. (2.) There he taught in the synagogues, their places of public worship where they met, not as in the temple for ceremonial services, but for the moral acts of devotion, to read and expound and apply the word, to pray and praise, and for church discipline; these came to be more frequented since the captivity, when the ceremonial worship was near expiring. (3.) This he did so that he came to a great reputation, a fame of him went through all that region, ver. 14. and it was a good fame; for ver. 15. he was glorified of all. Every body admired him and cried him up, they never heard such preaching as all their lives. Now at first he met with no contempt or contradiction, all glorified him, and there were none as yet that vilified him.

2. Of his preaching at Nazareth, the city where he was brought up, and the entertainment it met with there. And here we are told how he preached there, and how he was perceived.

First, How he preached there. And in that observe, (1.) The opportunity he had for it. He came to Nazareth when he had gained a reputation

in other places, in hopes that thereby something at least of the contempt and prejudice with which his countrymen would look upon him might be worn off. There he took occasion to preach, (1.) In the synagogue, the proper place, where it had been his custom to attend when he was a private person, ver. 16. We ought to attend on the public worship of God as we have opportunity. But now he was entered upon his public ministry, there he preached. Where the multitudes of sabbath were, there this wife Samaritan would call his note. (2.) On the sabbath-day, the proper time which the pious Jews spent, not in a mere ceremonial rest from worldly labour, but in the duties of God's worship, as of old they frequented the schools of the prophets, on the new moons and the sabbaths. Note, it is good to keep sabbaths in Christian assemblies.

(2.) The call he had to it. (1.) He stood up for to read; they had in their synagogues seven readers every sabbath, the first a priest, the second a levite, and the other five Israelites of that synagogue. We often find Christ preaching in other synagogues, but never reading but only in this synagogue at Nazareth, of which he had been many years a member; now he offered his service as he had perhaps often done, he read one of the lessons out of the prophets, Luke xvi. 15. Note, Reading the scriptures is very proper work to be done in religious assemblies; and Christ himself did not think it any disparagement to him to be employed in it. (2.) The book of the prophet Esaias was delivered to him, either by the ruler of the synagogue or by the minister mentioned, ver. 20, so that he was no intruder but duly authorized *pro hac vice*. The second lesson for that day being in the prophecy of Esaias, they gave him that volume to read it.

(3.) The text he preached upon. He stood up to read, to teach us reverence in reading and hearing the word of God. When Ezra opened the book of the law, all the people stood up, Neh. viii. 5. so did Christ here, when he read in the book of the prophets. Now the book being delivered to him, (1.) He opened it. The books of the Old Testament were in a manner shut up till Christ opened them, Isa. xxix. 11. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to take the book and open the seals, for he can open, not the book only, but the understanding. (2.) He found the place that was appointed to be read that day in course, which he needed not be directed to; he soon found it, and read it, and took it for his text; now his text was taken out of Isa. lxi. 1, 2, which is here quoted at large, ver. 18. 19. There was a providence in it, that the portion of scripture should be read that day, which speaks so very plainly of the Messiah, that they might be left inexcusable who knew him not, though they heard the voices of the prophets read every sabbath-day, which bare witness of him, Acts xiii. 27. This text gives a full account of Christ's undertaking, and the work he came into the world to do. Observe.

1. How he was qualified for the work; *the Spirit of the Lord is upon me*: all the gifts and graces of the Spirit were conferred upon him not by measure, as upon other prophets, but without measure, John iii. 34. He now came in the power of the Spirit, ver. 14.

2. How he was commissioned: *because he has anointed me*, and sent me. And his extraordinary qualification amounted to a commission; his being anointed, signifies both his being fitted for the undertaking and called to it. Those whom God appoints to any service he anoints for it; because he hath sent me, he hath sent his spirit along with me.

3. What his work was; he was qualified and commissioned,

1. To be a great prophet; he was anointed to preach, that is three times mentioned here, for that was the work he was now entering upon. Observe,

(1.) To whom he was to preach; to the poor; to those that were poor in the word; whom the Jewish doctors disdained to undertake the teaching of, and spoke of with contempt. To those that were poor in spirit, to the meek and humble, and to those that are truly sorrowful for sin. To them the gospel and the grace of it will be welcome, and they shall have it, Matt. xi. 5. (2.) What he was to preach; in general he must preach the gospel, He is sent *εὐαγγελίζεσθαι*, to evangelize them; not only to preach to them, but to make that preaching effectual; to bring it not only to their ears, but to their hearts, and deliver them into the mould of it.

Three things he is to preach.

1. Deliverance to the captives; the gospel is a proclamation of liberty, like that to Israel in Egypt and in Babylon. By the merit of Christ, sinners may be loosed from the bonds of guilt, and by his Spirit and grace from the bondage of corruption. It is a deliverance from the world of thraldoms, which all those shall have the benefit of that are willing to make Christ their head, and are willing to be ruled by him.

2. Recovering of sight to the blind; he came not only by the word of his gospel to bring light to them that sat in the dark; but by the power of his grace to give sight to them that were blind; not only the Gentile world but every unregenerate soul, that is not only in bondage but in blindness, like Samson and Zedekiah. Christ came to tell us that he has eyes-salve for us, which we may have for the asking; that if our prayers be, *Lord, that our eyes may be opened*, his answer shall be, *Receive your sight*.

3. The acceptable year of our Lord, ver. 18. He came to let the world know, that the God whom they had offended was willing to be reconciled to them, and to accept of them upon new terms; that there was yet a way of making their services acceptable to him, that there is now a time of good will towards men. It alludes to the year of release, or that of jubilee, which was an acceptable year to servants, that were then set at liberty; to debtors, against whom all actions then dropped; and to those who had mortgaged their lands, for then they returned to them again. Christ came to found the jubilee trumpet, and blessed were they that heard the joyful sound, Psal. lxxix. 15. it was an acceptable time, for it was a day of salvation.

2. Christ came to be a great physician, for he was sent to heal the broken-hearted, to comfort and cure afflicted consciences, and to give peace to those that were troubled and humbled for sins, and under a dread of God's wrath against them for them, and to bring them to rest who were weary and heavy-laden under the burden of guilt and corruption.

3. To be a great Redeemer, he not only proclaims liberty to the captives, as Cyrus did to the Jews in Babylon, *whoever will may go up*; but he sets at liberty them that are bruised, he doth by his Spirit incline and enable them to make use of the liberty granted, as then none did but those whose spirit God stirred up, Ezra i. 5. He came in God's name to discharge poor sinners that were debtors and prisoners to divine justice; the prophets could but proclaim liberty, but Christ as one having authority, as one that had power on earth to forgive sins, came to set at liberty, and therefore this clause is added here; and Dr. Lightfoot thinks, that according to a liberty the Jews allowed their readers to compare scripture to scripture in their readings for the explication of the text, Christ added it from Isa. lviii. 6. where it is made the duty of the acceptable year, to let the oppressed go free, where the phrase the LXX. use is the same with this here.

(4.) Here is Christ's application of this text to himself, ver. 21. When he had read it, he rolled up the book, and gave it again to the minister or clerk that attended, and sat down according to the custom of the Jewish teachers, he sat down in the temple, teaching, Matt. xxvi. 55. Now he began his discourse thus, *This day the scripture fulfilled in your ears*. This which Isaiah wrote by the way of prophecy, I have now read to you by way of history. It

now.

now began to be fulfilled in Christ's entrance upon his public ministry. Now, in the report they heard of his preaching and miracles in other places, *note*, in his preaching to them in their own synagogue. It is most probable Christ went on and shewed particularly how this scripture was fulfilled in the doctrines he preached concerning the kingdom of heaven at hand; that that was preaching liberty and light, and healing, and all the blessings of the *acceptable year of the Lord*; many other gracious words proceeding of his mouth, which these were but the *beginning of*: for Christ often preaches long sermons which we have but a short account of. This was enough to introduce a great deal. *This day is the scripture fulfilled.* Note, 1. All the scriptures of the Old Testament, that were to be fulfilled in the Messiah, have their full accomplishment in the Lord Jesus, which abundantly prove, that this was *he that should come*. 2. In the providences of God, it is fit to observe the *fulfilling of the scriptures*. The works of God are not only the accomplishment of his secret word, but of his word revealed; and it will help us to understand both the scriptures and the providences of God, to compare them one with another.

(5.) Here is the *attention and admiration* of the auditors.

1. Their *attention*, ver. 20. *The eyes of all them that were in the synagogue, and probably there were a great many, were fastened on him*, big with expectation what he would say, having heard so much of late concerning him. Note, It is good in hearing the word, to keep the eye fixed upon the minister by whom God is speaking to us; for as the eye affects the heart, so usually the heart follows the eye, and is wandering or fixed as that is. Or rather, let us learn hence to keep the eye fixed upon Christ speaking to us in and by the minister. *What saith my Lord unto his servant?*

2. Their *admiration*, ver. 22. *They all bear him witness, that he spoke admirably well and to the purpose; they all commended him, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth*; and yet as appears by what follows, they did not *believe in him*. Note, It is possible that those who are admirers of good ministers and good preaching, may be yet themselves no true Christians. Observe, (1.) What it was they admired; the *gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth*. The words of *peace*; good words, and spoken in a winning melting way. Note, Christ's words are words of *grace*, for grace being poured into his lip. Psal. xlv. 2. words of grace poured from them: and these words of grace are to be *wondered at*; Christ's name was wonderful, and in nothing was he more so, than in his grace, in the words of his grace, and the power that went along with those words. We may well wonder that he should speak such words of grace to such graceless wretches as we are. (2.) What it was that increased their wonder; and that was, the consideration of his original, *then said is not this Joseph's son?* And therefore his extraction means, and his education means. Some for this suggestion took occasion to say, so much the more to admire his gracious words, concluding that he must be taught by God, for they knew no one else had the gift. But others perhaps with this consideration increased their wonder at his gracious word, and concluded there could be nothing so lovely in them, whatever appeared, because he was the *son of Joseph*. Can any thing great or worthy our regard, come from one so mean?

(6.) Christ's anticipating an objection which he knew to be in the minds of many of his hearers. Observe.

1. What the objection was, ver. 23. *He will surely say to me Physician, heal thyself, i. e.* Because we know that I am the son of Joseph your neighbour, I expect that I should work miracles among you as I have done in other places as one would expect that a physician, if he be able should heal not only himself, but those of his own family and fraternity. Most of Christ's miracles were *cures*, now why should not the sick in thine own city be healed as well as those in other cities? They were designed to cure people of their unbelief, now why should not the disease of unbelief if it be indeed a disease, be cured in those of thine own city, as well as in those of others? *Whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, that has been so much talked of, do here also in thine own country.* They were pleased with Christ's gracious words, only because they hoped they were; but the introduction to some *wonderous works* of his; they wanted to have their lame, and blind, and sick, and lepers healed and helped, that the charge of their town might be eased; and that was the chief thing they looked at. They thought their own town as worthy to be the stage of miracles as any others; and why should not he rather draw company to that, than to any other? And why should not his neighbours and acquaintance have the benefit of his preaching and miracles rather than any other?

2. How he answers this objection against the course he took.

1. By a plain and positive reason why he would not make Nazareth his head quarters, ver. 24. because it generally holds true, *That no prophet is accepted in his own country*, at least not so well, nor with such probability of doing good as in some other country: experience seals to this. When prophets have been sent with messages and miracles of mercy, few of their own countrymen that have known their extraction and education have been fit to receive them. So Dr. Hammond. Familiarity breeds contempt; and we are apt to think meanly of those whose conversation we have been accustomed to; and they will scarcely be duly honoured as prophets, who were well known when they were in the rank of private men. That is most esteemed that is *far-fetched and dear bought*, above what is *home-bred*, though really more excellent. This arises likewise from the envy which neighbours commonly have towards one another, so that they cannot endure to see him their superior, whom a while ago they took to be every way their inferior. For this reason Christ declined working miracles or doing any thing extraordinary at Nazareth, because of the rooted prejudices they had against him there.

2. By pertinent examples of two of the most famous prophets of the Old Testament, who chose to dispense their favours among foreigners rather than among their own countrymen, and that no doubt, by divine direction.

4. Elijah maintained a widow of Sarepta, a city of Sidon, one that was a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, when there was a famine in the land, ver. 25, 26. The story we have 1 Kings xvii. 9. It is said there, that the heaven was shut up three years and six months, whereas it is said, 1 Kings xviii. 1. that in the third year Elijah shewed himself to Ahab, and there was rain; but that was not the third year of the drought, but the third year of Elijah's sojourning with the widow of Sarepta. As God would hereby shew himself a father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, so he would shew, that he was rich in mercy to all, even to the Gentiles.

2. Elisha cleansed Naaman the Syrian of his leprosy, though he was a Syrian, and not only a foreigner but an enemy to Israel, ver. 27. *Many lepers were in Israel in the days of Elisha*, four particularly, that brought the news of the Syrians raising the siege of Samaria, with precipitation, and leaving the plunder of their tents to enrich Samaria, when Elisha was himself in the besieged city, and this was the accomplishment of his prophecy too, see 2 Kings vii. 1--3. &c. And yet we do not find that Elisha cleansed them, no not for a reward of their service, and the good tidings they brought, but only this Syrian, for none but he had faith to apply himself

to the prophet for a cure. Christ himself often met with greater faith among Gentiles than in Israel. And here he mentions both these instances, to shew, that he did not dispense the favour of his miracles by private respect, but according to God's will and appointment. And the people of Israel might as justly have said to Elijah or Elisha, as the Nazarenes to Christ, *Physician, heal thyself*; nay, Christ wrought his miracles, though not among his townsmen, yet among Israelites, whereas these great prophets wrought theirs among the Gentiles. The examples of the saints, though they will not make a bad action good, yet will help to free a good action from the blame of exceptions people.

Secondly, How he was persecuted at Nazareth.

1. That which provoked them was, his taking notice of the favour which God by Elijah or Elisha shewed to the Gentiles. *When they heard these things they were filled with wrath*, ver. 28. they were all so; a great change since, ver. 22. when they wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth; thus uncertain are the opinions and affections of the multitude, and so very fickle. If they had mixed faith with those gracious words of Christ which they wondered at, they would have been awakened by these latter words of his, to take heed of sinning away their opportunities; but those only pleased the ear, and went no farther, and therefore these grieved on the ear, and irritated their corruptions. They were angry that he should compare himself, whom they knew to be the son of Joseph, with those great prophets, and compare them with the men of that corrupt age, when all had bowed the knee to Baal. But that which especially exasperated them was, that he intimated some kindness God had in reserve for the Gentiles, which the Jews could by no means bear the thoughts of, Acts xvii. 21. Their pious ancestors pleased themselves with the hopes of adding the Gentiles to the church, witness many of David's psalms and Isaiah's prophecies; but this degenerate race when they had forfeited the covenant themselves, hated to think that any others should be taken in.

2. They were provoked to that degree that they made an attempt upon his life. This was a severe trial, now at his setting out, but a foremen of the usage he met with, when he came to his own and they received him not. (1.) They rose up in a tumultuous manner against him, interrupted him in his discourse, and themselves in their devotions, for they could not stay until their synagogue worship was over. (2.) They thrust him out of the city, as one not worthy to have a residence among them, though there he had had a settlement so long. They thrust from them the Saviour and the salvation, as if he had been the off-scouring of all things. How justly might he have called for fire from heaven upon them? but this was the day of his patience. (3.) They led him to the brow of the hill, with a purpose to throw him down headlong, as one not to be alive. Though they knew how beneficially he had for so many years lived among them, how shining his conversation had been, though they had heard such a fame of him and had but just now themselves admired his gracious words, though in justice he ought to have been allowed a fair hearing and liberty to explain himself, yet they hurried him away in a popular fury or frenzy rather, to put him to death in a most barbarous manner. Sometimes they were ready to glorify in the good works he did, John x. 32. here, for not doing the good works they expected from him. To such a height of wickedness was violence sprung up.

3. Yet he escaped, because his hour was not yet come. He passed through the midst of them unhurt, either he blinded their eyes, as the Samaritans and Syrians were, or he bound their hands, or filled them with confusion, so that they could not do what they designed: for his work was not done, it was but just begun, his hour was not yet come, when it was come he freely foreordered himself. They drove him from them, and he went his way. He would have gathered Nazareth, but they would not, and therefore their house is left to them desolate. This added to the reproach of his being Jesus of Nazareth, that not only it was a place whence no good thing was expected, but that it was such a wicked, rude place, and so unkind to him. Yet there was a providence in it, that he should not be much helped by the men of Nazareth, for that would have looked like a collusion between him and his old acquaintance; but now though they received him not, there are those that did.

31. And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath-days. 32. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power. 33. ¶ And in the synagogue there was a man which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice. 34. Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art: the holy one of God. 35. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him and hurt him not. 36. And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves saying, What a word is this? for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out. 37. And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about. 38. ¶ And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house: and Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her. 39. And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose and ministered unto them. 40. ¶ Now when the sun was setting all they that had any sick with divers diseases, brought them unto him: and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. 41. And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them, suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ. 42. And when it was day, he departed; and went into a desert place; and the people sought him and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them. 43. And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent. 44. And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

Whe

When Christ was expelled Nazareth he came to Capernaum, another city of Galilee, the account we have in these verses of his preaching and miracles there, we have before, *Mark i. 21. &c.* Observe,

1. His preaching. He taught them on the sabbath days, ver. 31. In hearing the word preached, as an ordinance of God, we worship God, and it is a proper work for sabbath-days. Christ's preaching much affected the people, ver. 32. they were astonished at his doctrine, there was weight in every word he said, and admirable discoveries were made to them by it. The doctrine itself was astonishing, and not only as it came from one that had not had a liberal education; his word was with power: There was a commanding force in it, and a working power went along with it to the consciences of men. The doctrine Paul preached, hereby proved itself to be of God, that it came in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

2. His miracles. Of these we have here,

1. Two particularly instanced in, shewing Christ to be,

I. A controller and conqueror of Satan, in the world of mankind, and in the souls of people, by his power to cast them out of the bodies of those he had taken possession of; for for this purpose was he manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Observe, (1.) The devil is an unclean spirit, his nature directly contrary to that of the pure and holy God, and degenerated from what it was at first. (2.) This unclean spirit works in the children of men; in the souls of many, as then in men's bodies. (3.) It is not impossible that those who are very much under the power and working of Satan, may yet be found in the synagogue among the worshippers of God. (4.) Even the devils know and believe that Jesus Christ is the only One of God, is sent of God, and is a holy One. (5.) They believe and tremble, this unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice, under a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and apprehensive that Christ was now come to destroy them. Unclean spirits are subject to continual frights. (6.) The devils have nothing to do with Jesus Christ, nor desire to have any thing to do with him, for he took net on him the nature of angels. (7.) Christ has the devil under check; he rebuked him, saying hold thy peace, and this word he speaks with power; *ἐμωχθη* he muzzled; Christ did not only enjoin him silence, but stopped his mouth, and forced him to be silent against his will. (8.) In the breaking of Satan's power, both the enemy that is conquered shews his malice, and Christ, the conqueror shews his over-ruling grace. Here, (1.) The devil shewed what he would have done, when he threw the man in the midst, with force and fury, as if he would have dashed him to pieces. But (2.) Christ shewed what a power he had over him, in that he not only forced him to leave him, but to leave him without so much as hurting him, without giving him a parting blow, or parting gripe. Whom Satan cannot destroy he will do all the hurt he can to; but this is a comfort, he can harm them no farther than Christ's permits; nay, he shall not do them any real harm. He came out and hurt him not, i. e. the poor man was perfectly well in an instant though the devil left him with so much rage, that all that were present thought he had torn him to pieces. (9.) Christ's power over devils was universally acknowledged and adored, ver. 36. No one doubted of the truth of the miracle, it was evident beyond contradiction, nor was any thing suggested to diminish the glory of it, for they were all amazed, saying what a word is this! They that pretended to cast out devils did it with abundance of charms and spells to pacify the devil, and lull him asleep as it were, but Christ commanded them with authority and power, which they could not gainsay or resist. Even the prince of the power of the air is his vassal, and trembles before him. (10.) This as much as any thing, gained Christ a reputation and spread his fame. This instance of his power which many now-a-days make light of, was then by them that were eye-witnesses of it, and those no fools neither, but men of penetration, magnified, and was looked upon as greatly magnifying him, ver. 37. upon the account of this, the fame of him went out more than ever into every place of the country round about. Our Lord Jesus when he set out at first in his public ministry was mightily talked of, more than afterwards, when people's admiration wore off with the novelty of the thing.

2. Christ shewed himself to be a healer of the diseases; in the former he struck at the root of man's misery, which was Satan's enmity, the origin of all the mischief: In this he strikes at one of the most spreading branches of it, one of the most common calamities of human life, and that is, bodily diseases, which came in with sin, are the most common and sensible corrections for it in this life, and contribute as much as any thing towards the making our few days full of trouble. These our Lord Jesus came to take away the sting of, and as an indication of that intention, when he was on earth, chose to confirm his doctrine by such miracles mostly, as took away the diseases themselves. Of all bodily diseases none more common or fatal to grown people than fevers, these come suddenly, and suddenly cut off the number of men's months in the midst; are sometimes epidemical, and slay their thousands in a little time. Now here we have Christ's curing of a fever with a word's speaking; the place was in Simon's house, his patient was Simon's wife's mother; ver. 38, 39. Observe, (1.) Christ is a guest that will pay well for his entertainment; those that bid him welcome into their hearts and houses, shall be no losers by him; he comes with healing. (2.) Even families that Christ visits, yet may be visited with sickness. Houses that are blessed with his distinguishing favours, yet are liable to the common calamities of this life. Simon's wife's mother was ill of a fever; Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick. (3.) Even good people may sometimes be exercised with the sharpest afflictions, more grievous than others; she was taken with a great fever, very acute and high, and threatening; perhaps it seized her head, and made her delirious. The most gentle fevers may by degrees prove dangerous, but this was at first a great fever. (4.) No age can exempt from diseases. It is likely Peter's mother-in-law was in years, and yet in a fever. (5.) When our relations are sick, we ought to apply ourselves to Christ by faith and prayer on their account. They besought him for her; and there is a particular promise, that the prayer of faith shall benefit the sick. (6.) Christ has a tender concern for his people when they are in sickness and distress; he stood over her, as one concerned for her, and compassionating her case. (7.) Christ had, and still has a sovereign power over bodily diseases; he rebuked the fever, and with a word's speaking commanded it away, and it left her. He saith to diseases go, and they go, come and they come; and can still rebuke fevers, even great fevers. (8.) This proves Christ's cures to be miraculous, that they were done in an instant, immediately she arose. (9.) Where Christ gives a new life, in recovery from sickness, he designs and expects that it should be a new life indeed, spent more than ever in his service, to his glory. If distempers be rebuked, and we arise from a bed of sickness, we must set ourselves to minister to Jesus Christ. (10.) Those that minister to Christ, must be ready to minister to all that are his for his sake. She ministered to them, not only to him that had cured her, but to them that besought him for her. We must study to be grateful to them that have prayed for us.

2. A general account given by wholesale of many other miracles of the same kind which Christ did.

1. He cured many that were diseased, even all without exception that

made their application to him, ver. 40. it was when the sun was setting, in the evening of that sabbath-day, which he had spent in the synagogue. Note, It is good to do a full sabbath-day's work, to abound in the work of the day, in some good work or other, even till sun-set; as those that call the sabbath and the business of it a delight. Observe, He cured all that were sick, poor as well as rich, and though they were sick of divers diseases; so that there was no room to suspect that he had only a specific for some one disease; he had a remedy for every malady. The sign he used in healing was laying his hands on the sick; not lifting up his hands for them, for he healed as having authority. He healed by his power. And thus he would put honour upon that sign which was afterwards used in conferring the Holy Ghost.

2. He cast the devil out of many that were possessed, ver. 41. Confessions were extorted from the demoniacs, they said, Thou art Christ the Son of God, but they said it crying with rage and indignation, it was a confession upon the rack, and therefore was not admitted in evidence; Christ rebuked them, and did not suffer them to say that they knew him to be the Christ, that it might appear beyond all contradiction that he had obtained a conquest over them, and not a compact with them.

3. Here is his removal from Capernaum, ver. 42, 43.

1. He retired for a while into a place of solitude: it was but a little while that he allowed himself for sleep; not only because a little served him, but because he was content with a little, and never indulged himself in ease; but when it was day he went into a desert place, not to live constantly like a hermit, but to be sometimes alone with God, as even those should be and contrive to be, that are most engaged in public work, or else their work will go on but poorly, and they will find themselves never less alone, than when thus alone.

2. He returned again to the places of concourse, and to the work he had to do there. Though a desert place may be a convenient retreat, yet it is not a convenient residence: because we were not sent into this world to live to ourselves, no not to the best part of ourselves only, but to glorify God and to do good in our generation.

1. He was extremely courted to Capernaum again. The people were mighty fond of him, I doubt more because he had healed their sickness, than because he had preached repentance to them: they sought him, enquired which way he went, and though it was in a desert place they came unto him. A desert is no desert if we be with Christ there; and they stayed him that he should not depart from them, so that if he would go it should not be for want of invitation. His old neighbours at Nazareth had driven him from them, but his new acquaintance at Capernaum were very importunate for his continuance with them. Note, It ought not to discourage the ministers of Christ that some reject them, for they will meet with others that will welcome them and their message.

2. He chose rather to diffuse the light of his gospel to many places than to fix it to one, that no one might pretend to be a mother church to the rest. Though he was welcome at Capernaum, and had done abundance of good there, yet he is sent to preach the gospel to other cities also: and Capernaum must not insist upon his stay there. They that enjoy the benefit of the gospel, must be willing that others also should share in that benefit, and not covet the monopoly of it. And those ministers who are not driven from one place, may yet be drawn to another by a prospect of greater usefulness. Christ, though he preached not in vain in the synagogue at Capernaum, yet would not be tied to that, but preached in the synagogues of Galilee, ver. 44. *Bonum est sui diffusum.* It is well for us, that our Lord Jesus has not tied himself to any one place or people, but wherever two or three are gathered in his name, he will be in the midst of them: and even in Galilee of the Gentiles, his special presence is in the Christian synagogue.

C H A P. V.

In this chapter we have, (1.) Christ's preaching to the people out of Peter's ship for want of a better pulpit, ver. 1-3. (2.) The recompence he made to Peter for the loan of his boat, in a miraculous draught of fishes; by which he intimated to him and his partners his design to make them as apostles fishers of men, ver. 4-11. (3.) His cleansing the leper, ver. 12-15. (4.) A short account of his private devotion and public ministry, ver. 16-17. (5.) His cure of the man sick of the palsy, ver. 18-26. (6.) His calling Levi the publican, and conversing with publicans on that occasion, ver. 27-32. (7.) His justifying his disciples in not fasting so frequently as the disciples of John and the Pharisees did, ver. 33. ad finem.

1. AND it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesareth. 2. And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. 3. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people out of the ship. 4. Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. 5. And Simon answering said unto him, Master we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing; nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. 6. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. 7. And they beckoned unto their partners which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. 8. When Simon Peter saw it he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me: for I am a sinful man, O Lord. 9. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken. 10. And so was also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon, and Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. 11. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all and followed him.

This passage of story, fell, in order of time, before the two miracles we had in the close of the foregoing chapter, and is the same with that which was more briefly related by Matthew and Mark, of Christ's calling Peter and Andrew to be *fishers of men*, Matt. iv. 18. and Mark i. 16.

They had not related this miraculous draught of fishes at that time, having only in view the calling of his disciples, but Luke gives us that story as one of the many signs which Jesus did in the presence of his disciples, which had not been written in the foregoing books, John xx. 30, 31. Observe here,

1. What vast crowds attend Christ's preaching; *the people pressed about him to hear the word of God*, ver. 1. inasmuch that no house would contain them, but he was forced to draw them out to the *strand*, that they might be minded of the promise made to Abraham, that his seed should be *as the sand upon the sea-shore*, Gen. xxii. 17. and yet of them but a *remnant shall be saved*, Rom. ix. 27. The people *flocked about him*, so the word signifies; they shewed respect to his preaching; though not without some rudeness to his person, which was very excusable, for they *pressed upon him*. Some would reckon this a diminution to him, to be thus cried up by the vulgar when none of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him; but he reckoned it an honour to him, for their souls were as precious as the souls of the *gracees*; and it is his aim to bring not so much the mighty as the *many sons to God*; and it was foretold concerning him, that *to him shall the gathering of the people be*. Christ was a popular preacher, and though he was able at twelve to dispute with the doctors, yet he chose at thirty to preach to the capacity of the vulgar. See how the people relished *good preaching*, though under all external disadvantages; they pressed to hear the word of God; they could perceive it to be the word of God by the divine power and evidence that went along with it, and therefore they coveted to hear it.

2. What poor conveniences Christ had for preaching, he stood *by the lake of Genesareth*, ver. 1. upon the level with the crowd, so that they could not see him or hear him; he was lost among them, and every one striving to get near him he was crowded, and in danger of being crowded into the water: what must he do? It doth not appear that his hearers had any contrivance to give him advantage, but *there were two ships or fisher boats brought to shore*, one belonged to Simon and Andrew, the other to Zebedee, and his sons, ver. 2. At first Christ saw Peter and Andrew fishing at some distance, so Matthew tells us, chap. iv. 18. but he waited till they came to land, and till the *fishermen*, that is the servants, were gone out of them, having washed their nets and thrown them by for that time; so Christ entered into that ship that belonged to Simon, and begged of him that he would lend it him for a pulpit; and though he might have commanded him, yet for love's sake he rather prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land, which would be the worse for his being heard, but Christ would have it so, that he might the better be seen; and it is his being lifted up that draws men to him. Wisdom cries in the top of high places, Prov. viii. 2. it intimates, that Christ had a strong voice, strong indeed, for he made the dead to hear it, and that he did not desire to favour himself. There he sat down and taught the people the good knowledge of the Lord.

3. What a particular acquaintance Christ hereupon fell into with these fishermen. They had had some conversation with him before, which began at John's baptism, John i. 40, 41. they were with him at Cana of Galilee, John ii. 2. and in Judea, John iv. 2. but as yet they were not called to attend him constantly, and therefore here we have them at their calling, and now it was that they were called into a more intimate fellowship with Christ.

1. When Christ had done preaching, he ordered Peter to apply himself to the business of his calling again. *Lanck out into the deep, and let down your nets*, ver. 4. It was not the sabbath-day, and therefore as soon as the lecture was over he set them to work. Time spent on week-days in the public exercises of religion, may be but little hindrance to us in time, and a great furtherance to us in temper of mind, in our worldly business. With what cheerfulness may we go about the duties of our calling, when we have been in the mount with God, and from thence fetch a double blessing into our worldly employments, and thus have them sanctified to us by the word and prayer? It is our wisdom and duty so to manage our religious exercises, as that they may befriend our worldly business, and so to manage our worldly business, as that it may be no enemy to our religious exercises.

2. Peter having attended upon Christ in his preaching, Christ will accompany him in his fishing; he said with Christ at the shore, and now Christ will launch out with him into the deep. Note, Those that will be constant followers of Christ, shall have him a constant guide to them.

3. Christ orders Peter and his ship's crew, to cast their nets into the sea, which they do in obedience to him, though they had been hard at it all night and had caught nothing, ver. 4, 6.

We may observe here,

1. How melancholy their business had now been. *Master, we have toiled all the night*, when we should have been asleep in our beds, and have taken nothing, but have had our labour for our pains; one would have thought that would have excused them from hearing the sermon, but such a love had they to the word of God, that it was more refreshing and reviving to them after a wearisome night than the softest slumbers. But they mention it to Christ, when he bids them go a fishing again. Note, (1.) Some callings are much more toilsome than others are, and more perilous; yet providence has so ordered it for the common good, that there is no useful calling so discouraging but some or other have a genius for it. Those that follow their business, and get abundance by it with a great deal of ease, should think with compassion of those who cannot follow theirs but with a great fatigue, and hardly get a bare livelihood by it. When we have rested all night, let us not forget those who have toiled all night, as Jacob when he kept Laban's sheep. (2.) Be the calling never so laborious, it is good to see people diligent in it and make the best of it: these fishermen that were thus industrious, Christ singled out for his favourites. They were fit to be preferred as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, that had thus learned to endure hardness. (3.) Even those that are most diligent in their business, yet often meet with disappointments; they that toiled all night yet caught nothing; for the race is not always to the swift. God will have us to be diligent, purely in duty to his command, and dependence upon his goodness, rather than with an assurance of worldly success. We must do our duty, and then leave the event to God. (4.) When we are tired with our worldly business, and crossed in our worldly affairs, we are welcome to come to Christ and spread our case before him, who will take cognizance of it.

2. How ready their obedience was to the command of Christ; *Nevertheless at thy word, I will let down the net*. 1. Though they had toiled all night, yet if Christ bid them they will renew their toil, for they know that they that wait on him shall renew their strength, as work is renewed upon their hands; for every fresh service they shall have a fresh supply of grace sufficient. 2. Though they have taken nothing, yet if Christ bid them let down for a draught, they will hope to take something. Note, We must not presently quit the callings wherewith we are called, because we have not the success in them we promised ourselves. The ministers of the gospel must continue to let down that net, though they have perhaps toiled long and caught

nothing; and this is thank-worthy, to continue unwearied in our labours, though we see not the success of them. 3. In this they have an eye to the word of Christ, and a dependence upon that; *at thy word I will let down the net*, because thou dost enjoin it, and thou dost encourage it. We are then likely to speed when we follow the conduct of Christ's word.

4. The draught of fish they caught was so much beyond what was ever known, that it amounted to a miracle, ver. 6. They inclosed a great multitude of fishes, so that their nets brake, and yet, what is strange, they did not lose their draught; it was so great a draught that they had not hands enow to draw it up; but they were fain to beckon to their partners, who were at a distance, out of call, to come and help them, ver. 7. But the greatest evidence of the vastness of the draught was, that they filled both the ships with fish to that degree, that they overloaded them, and they began to sink, so that the fish had like to have been lost again with their own weight; as many an overgrown estate raised out of the water, returns to the place from whence it came. Suppose these ships were but five or six tons a piece; what a vast quantity of fish must there be to load, nay to over-load them both.

Now by this vast draught of fishes, (1.) Christ intended to shew his dominion in the seas as well as on the dry land; over its wealth as over its waves; thus he would shew that he was that *Son of man* under whose feet all things were put, and particularly the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea, Psal. viii. 8. (2.) He intended hereby to confirm the doctrine he had just now preached out of Peter's ship. We may suppose that the people on the shore who heard the sermon, having a notion that the preacher was a prophet sent of God, carefully attended his motions afterwards, and stayed halting about there, to see what he would do next; and this miracle immediately following, would be a confirmation to their faith, of his being at least a teacher come from God. (3.) He intended hereby to repay Peter for the loan of his boat, for Christ's gospel now, as his ark formerly in the house of Obed-edom, will be sure to make friends, rich friends, for its kind entertainment. None shall shut a door or kindle a fire done to his name, are abundant, they are super-abundant. (4.) He intended hereby to give a specimen to those who were to be his ambassadors to the world of the success of their embassy, that though they might for a time, and in one particular place toil and catch nothing, yet that they should be instrumental to bring in many to Christ, and inclose many in the gospel net.

5. The impression which this miraculous draught of fishes made upon Peter was very remarkable.

1. All concerned were astonished, and the more astonished for their being concerned: all the boats crew were astonished at the draught of fishes which they had taken, ver. 9. they were all surprised; and the more they considered it, and all the circumstances of it, the more they were wonder-struck, I had almost said thunder-struck at the thought of it, and so were also James and John, which were partners with Simon, ver. 10. and who, for ought appears, were not so well acquainted with Christ before this as Peter and Andrew were. Now they were the more affected with it, (1.) Because they understood it better than others did: they that were well acquainted with this sea, and it is likely had plied upon it many years, had never seen such a draught of fishes fetched out of it, nor any thing like it, any thing near it; and therefore could not be tempted to diminish it as others might, by supposing that it was accidental at this time, and what might as well have happened at any time. It greatly corroborates the evidence of Christ's miracles, that those who were best acquainted with them, most admired them. (2.) Because they were most interested in it and benefited by it. Peter and his part-owner were gainers by this great draught of fishes, it was a rich booty for them, and therefore it transported them, and their joy was a helper to their faith. Note, When Christ's works of wonder are to us in particular works of grace, then especially they command our faith in his doctrine.

2. Peter above all the rest was so astonished, to such a degree, that he fell down at Jesus's knees as he sat in the stern of his boat, and said as one in an ecstasy or transport, that knew not where he was or what he said, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord*, ver. 8. not that he feared the weight of the fish would sink him, because he was a sinful man, but that he thought himself unworthy of the favour of Christ's presence in his boat, and worthy that it should be to him a matter rather of terror than of comfort. This word of Peter's came from the same principle with theirs that, under the Old Testament, so often said they did exceedingly fear and quake at the extraordinary displays of the divine glory and majesty. It was the language of Peter's humility and self-denial, and had not the least tincture of the devil's dialect, *What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?* (1.) His acknowledgment was very just, and what becomes us all to make: *I am a sinful man, O Lord*. Note, Even the best men are sinful men, and should be ready on all occasions to own it, and especially to own it to Jesus Christ; for to whom else, but to him who came into the world to save sinners, should sinful men apply themselves? (2.) His inference from it was what might have been just, though really it was not so. If I be a sinful man, as indeed I am, I ought to say, come to me, O Lord, or let me come to thee, or I am undone, for ever undone: but considering what reason sinful men have to tremble before the holy Lord God, and to dread his wrath, Peter may well be excused, if in a sense of his own sinfulness and vileness he cried out on a sudden, *Depart from me*. Note, Those whom Christ designs to admit to the most intimate acquaintance with him, he first makes sensible that they deserve to be set at the greatest distance from him. We must all own ourselves sinful men, and that therefore Jesus Christ might justly depart from us, but we must therefore fall down at his knees to pray him that he would not depart; for woe unto us if he leaves us, if the Saviour depart from the sinful man.

6. The occasion which Christ took from hence to intimate to Peter, ver. 10. and soon after to James and John, Matt. iv. 21. his purpose to make them his apostles, and instruments of his planting religion in the world: He said unto Simon, who is in the greatest surprise of any of them at this prodigious draught of fishes, Thou shalt both see and do greater things than these; fear not; let not this astonish thee, be not afraid that after having done thee this honour, it is so great that I shall never do thee more; No, from henceforth thou shalt catch men, by inclosing them in the gospel net, and that shall be a greater instance of the Redeemer's power, and his favour to thee, than this is. That shall be a more astonishing miracle, and infinitely more advantageous than this. When by Peter's preaching three thousand souls were, in one day, added to the church, the type of this great draught of fishes was abundantly answered.

Lastly, The fishermen's farewell to their calling, in order to their constant attendance on Christ, ver. 11. When they had brought their ships to land, instead of going to seek for a market for their fish, that they might make the best hand they could of this miracle, they forsook all and followed him, being more solicitous to serve the interests of Christ, than to advance any secular interests of their own. It is observable, that they left all to follow Christ, when their calling prospered in their hands more than ever it had

done, and they had had uncommon success in it. When riches increase, and we are therefore most in temptation to set our hearts upon them, then to quit them for the service of Christ, this is *thank-worthy*.

12. ¶ And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus, fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. 13. And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him. 14. And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. 15. But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities. 16. ¶ And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

Here is, 1. The cleansing of a leper, *ver. 12—14*. This story we had, both in Matthew and Mark; it is here said to have been in a certain city, *ver. 12*. it was in Capernaum; but the evangelist would not name it, perhaps because it was a reflection upon the government of the city, that a leper was suffered to be in it. This man is said to be full of leprosy, he had that distemper in a high degree, which doth the more fitly represent our natural pollution by sin; we are full of that leprosy from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there is no soundness in us. Now let us learn here,

1. What we must do in the sense of our spiritual leprosy: (1.) We must see Jesus, enquire after him, and acquaint ourselves with him, and reckon the discoveries made to us of Christ by the gospel the most acceptable and welcome discoveries that could be made us: (2.) We must humble ourselves before him, as this leper, seeing Jesus, fell on his face. We must be ashamed of our pollution, and in the sense of it blush to lift up our faces before the holy Jesus. (3.) We must earnestly desire to be cleansed from the defilement, and cured of the disease of sin, which renders us unfit for communion with God. (4.) We must firmly believe Christ's ability and sufficiency to cleanse us; Lord, Thou canst make me clean, though I be full of leprosy: no doubt is to be made of the merit and grace of Christ. (5.) We must be importunate in prayer for pardoning mercy and renewing grace, he fell on his face and besought him; they that would be cleansed, must reckon it a favour worth wrestling for. (6.) We must refer ourselves to the good will of Christ; Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst: This is not to much the language of his diffidence or distrust of the good-will of Christ, as of his submission and reference of himself and his case to the will, to the good-will of Jesus Christ.

2. What we may expect from Christ, if we thus apply ourselves to him. (1.) We shall find him very condescending, and forward to take cognizance of our case, *ver. 13*. He put forth his hand and touched him. When Christ visited this leprous world, unasked, unsought unto, he shewed how low he could stoop to do good. His touching the leper was wonderful condescension; but it is much greater to us, when he is himself touched with the feelings of our infirmities. (2.) We shall find him very compassionate and ready to relieve us: he said, I will, never doubt of that: whosoever comes to me to be healed, I will in no wise cast out; he is as willing to cleanse leprous souls as they can be to be cleansed. (3.) We shall find him all-sufficient and able to heal and cleanse us, though we be never so full of this loathsome leprosy. One word, one touch from Christ, did the business, immediately the leprosy departed from him. If Christ saith, I will, be thou justified, be thou sanctified, it is done; for he has power on earth to forgive sin, and power to give the holy Spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 11.

3. What he requires from those that are cleansed, *ver. 14*. Has Christ sent his word and healed us? (1.) We must be very humble, *ver. 12*. He charged him to tell no man: It should seem, this did not forbid him telling it to the honour of Christ, but he must not tell it to his own honour. Those whom Christ hath healed and cleansed, must know that he hath done it in such a way as doth for ever exclude boasting. (2.) We must be very thankful, and make a grateful acknowledgement of the divine grace: Go, and offer for thy cleansing. Christ did not require him to give him a fee, but to bring the sacrifice of praise to God, so far was he from using his power, to the prejudice of the law of Moses. (3.) We must keep close to our duty; go to the priest and those that attend him. The man whom Christ had made whole he found in the temple, John v. 14. Those that by any affliction have been detained from public ordinances, when the affliction is removed, should attend on them the more diligently, and adhere to them the more constantly.

2. Christ's public serviceableness to men, and his private communion with God: these are put together here to give lustre to each other.

1. Though never any had so much pleasure in his retirements as Christ had, yet he was much in a crowd to do good, *ver. 15*. Though the leper should altogether hold his peace, yet the thing could not be hid, so much the more went there a fame abroad of him; the more he sought to conceal himself under a veil of humility, the more notice did the people take of him, for honour is like a shadow, which flees from those that pursue it, for a man to seek his own glory, is not glory, but it follows that those decline it, and draw from it. The less good men say of themselves the more will others say of them. But Christ reckoned it a small honour to him, that his fame went abroad, and it was much more so, that hereby multitudes were brought to receive benefit by him. (1.) By his preaching, they came together to hear him, and to receive instruction from him concerning the kingdom of God. (2.) By his miracles; they came to be healed by him of their infirmities, and that invited them to come to hear him, confirmed his doctrine, and recommended it.

2. Though never any did so much good in public, yet he found time for pious and devout retirements, *ver. 16*. He withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed, not that he needed to avoid either distraction or ostentation, but he would set us an example, who need to order the circumstances of our devotion so as to guard against both. It is likewise our wisdom so to order our affairs, as that our public work and our secret work may not intrench upon or interfere with one another. Note, Secret prayer must be performed secretly; and those that have never so much to do of the business in this world, must keep up constant stated times for it.

17. ¶ And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem: and the

power of the Lord was present to heal them. 18. ¶ And behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with the palsy; and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him. 19. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in, because of the multitude, they went upon the house top, and let him down through the tiling with his couch, into the midst before Jesus. 20. And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, Thy sins are forgiven thee. 21. And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying. Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? 22. But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts? 23. Whether is it easier to say, thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Rise up and walk? 24. But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch and go into thine house. 25. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. 26. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.

Here is, 1. A general account of Christ's preaching and miracles, *ver. 17*. (1.) He was teaching on a certain day, not on the sabbath-day, then he would have said so, but on a week day: six days shalt thou labour, not only for the world, but for thy soul, and the welfare of that. Preaching and hearing the word of God is good work, if it be done well, any day in the week, as well as on sabbath-days. It was not in the synagogue, but in a private house; for even there, where we ordinarily converse with our friends, it is not improper to give and receive good instruction. (2.) There he taught, he healed, as before, *ver. 15*. and the power of the Lord was to heal them, *ver. 18*. *ver. 18* *ver. 19* *ver. 20* *ver. 21* *ver. 22* *ver. 23* *ver. 24* *ver. 25* *ver. 26* *ver. 27* *ver. 28* *ver. 29* *ver. 30* *ver. 31* *ver. 32* *ver. 33* *ver. 34* *ver. 35* *ver. 36* *ver. 37* *ver. 38* *ver. 39* *ver. 40* *ver. 41* *ver. 42* *ver. 43* *ver. 44* *ver. 45* *ver. 46* *ver. 47* *ver. 48* *ver. 49* *ver. 50* *ver. 51* *ver. 52* *ver. 53* *ver. 54* *ver. 55* *ver. 56* *ver. 57* *ver. 58* *ver. 59* *ver. 60* *ver. 61* *ver. 62* *ver. 63* *ver. 64* *ver. 65* *ver. 66* *ver. 67* *ver. 68* *ver. 69* *ver. 70* *ver. 71* *ver. 72* *ver. 73* *ver. 74* *ver. 75* *ver. 76* *ver. 77* *ver. 78* *ver. 79* *ver. 80* *ver. 81* *ver. 82* *ver. 83* *ver. 84* *ver. 85* *ver. 86* *ver. 87* *ver. 88* *ver. 89* *ver. 90* *ver. 91* *ver. 92* *ver. 93* *ver. 94* *ver. 95* *ver. 96* *ver. 97* *ver. 98* *ver. 99* *ver. 100* *ver. 101* *ver. 102* *ver. 103* *ver. 104* *ver. 105* *ver. 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forgive sins, has such a full attestation. (3.) That Jesus Christ is God. He appears to be so. (1.) By *knowing the thoughts* of the Scribes and Pharisees, *ver. 22*, which it is God's prerogative to do; though these Scribes and Pharisees knew as well how to conceal their thoughts and to keep their countenances as most men, and probably were industrious to do it at this time, for they lay in wait secretly. (2.) By doing that, which their thoughts owned that none could do but God only, *ver. 21*. *Who can forgive sins?* say they, *but only God?* I will prove, saith Christ, that I can forgive sins; and what follows then, but that *he is God?* What horrid wickedness then were they guilty of, who charged him with speaking the *worst of blasphemies*, then when he spoke the *best of blessings*, *Thy sins be forgiven thee!*

9. The duties that are taught us, and recommended to us by this story.

(1.) In our applications to Christ we must be very *pressing and urgent*: that is an evidence of faith, and is very pleasing to Christ and prevailing with him. They that were the friends of this sick man *sought means to bring him in before Christ*, *ver. 18*, and when they were baffled in their endeavour, yet did not give up the cause: but when they could not get in by the door, it was so crowded, they untiled the house, and let the poor patient down through the roof, *into the midst before Jesus*, *ver. 19*. In this Jesus Christ *show their faith*, *ver. 20*. Now here he has taught us (and it were well if we could learn the lesson) to *put the best construction* upon words and actions that they will bear. When the centurion and the woman of Canaan were in no care at all to bring the patients they interceded for into Christ's presence, but believed that he could cure them *at a distance*, he commended their faith; but though in these there seemed to be a different notion of the thing, and apprehension that it was requisite the patient should be brought into his presence, yet he did not *censure and condemn* their weakness, did not ask them what need you give this disturbance to the assembly? Are you under such a degree of infidelity, as to think I could not have cured him, though he had been out of doors? But he made the best of it, and even in this he saw *their faith*. It is a comfort to us that we serve a Master that is willing to make the best of us. (2.) When we are sick, we should be more in care to get our sins pardoned, than to get our sickness removed. Christ, in what he said to this man, taught us when we seek to God for health, to begin with seeking to him for pardon. (3.) The mercies which we have the comfort of, God must have the praise of. The man departed to his own house glorifying God, *ver. 25*. To him belong the escapes from death, and in them therefore he must be glorified. (4.) The miracles which Christ wrought were amazing to them that saw them, and we ought to glorify God in them, *ver. 26*. They said, *We have seen strange things to day*, such as we never saw before, nor our fathers before us, they are altogether new. But they glorified God, who had sent into their country such a benefactor to it; and were filled with fear, with a reverence of God, with a jealousy that this was the Messiah, and that he was not treated by their nation as he ought to be, which might prove in the end the ruin of their state; perhaps they were some such thoughts as these that filled them with fear, and a concern likewise for themselves.

27. ¶ And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom; and he said unto him, Follow me. 28. And he left all, and rose up and followed him. 29. And Levi made him a great feast in his own house; and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them. 30. But their Scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? 31. And Jesus answering, said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. 32. I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. 33. And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink? 34. And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them. 35. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. 36. And he spake also a parable unto them: No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old. 37. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. 38. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. 39. No man also having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.

All this except the last verse we had before in Matthew and Mark; it is not the story of any miracle in nature wrought by our Lord Jesus, but it is an account of some of the wonders of his grace, which to those who understand things aright, are no less cogent proofs of Christ's being sent of God than the other.

1. It was a wonder of his grace, that he would call a publican from the receipt of custom to be his disciple and follower, *ver. 27*. It was wonderful condescension that he would admit poor fishermen to that honour, men of the lowest rank; but much more wonderful that he would admit publicans, men of the worst reputation, men of ill fame; in this Christ humbled himself, and appeared in the likeness of the sinful flesh; by this he exposed himself, and got the invidious character of a friend to publicans and sinners.

2. It was a wonder of his grace, that that call was made effectual, become immediately so, *ver. 28*. This publican, though those of that employment commonly had little inclination to religion, yet for his religion's sake he left a good place in the custom house, which probably was his livelihood, and where he stood fair for better preferment, and rose up and followed Christ. There is no heart too hard for the Spirit and grace of Christ to work upon, nor any difficulties in the way of a sinner's conversion insuperable to his power.

3. It was a wonder of his grace, that he would not only admit a converted publican into his family, but would keep company with unconverted publicans, that he might have an opportunity of doing their souls good; and justified himself in it, as agreeing with the great design of his coming into the world. Here is a wonder of grace indeed, that Christ undertakes to

be the physician of souls disordered by sin, and ready to die of the distemper, *ver. 31*. He is a healer by office: that he has a particular regard to the sick, to sinners as his patients, convinced awakened sinners, that see their need of the physician; That he came to call sinners, the worst of sinners to repentance, and to assure them of pardon upon repentance, *ver. 32*. This is glad tidings of great joy indeed.

4. It was a wonder of grace that he did so patiently bear the contradiction of sinners against himself and his disciples, *ver. 30*. He did not express his resentments of the cavils of the Scribes and Pharisees, as he justly might have done, but answered them with reason and meekness; and instead of taking that occasion to shew his displeasure against the Pharisees, as afterwards he did, or of recriminating upon them, he took that occasion to shew his compassion to poor publicans, another sort of sinners, and to encourage them.

5. It was a wonder of his grace that in the discipline which he trained his disciples up under, he considered their frame, and proportioned their services to their strength and standing, and to the circumstances they were in. It was objected as a blemish upon his conduct, that he did not make his disciples fast so often as those of the Pharisees, and John Baptist did, *ver. 33*. He insisted most upon that which is the soul of fasting, the mortification of sin, the crucifying of the flesh, and living a life of self-denial, which is as much better than fasting and corporal penances, as mercy is than sacrifices.

6. It was a wonder of his grace that Christ reserved the trials of his disciples for their latter times, when by his grace they were in some good measure better prepared and fitted for them than they were at first. Now they were as the children of the bride-chamber, when the bridegroom is with them, when they have plenty and joy, and every day is a festival, Christ was welcomed wherever he came, and they for his sake, and as yet they met with little or no opposition: But this will not last always, the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, *ver. 35*. When Christ shall leave them with their hearts full of sorrow, their hands full of work, and the world full of enmity and rage against them, then shall they fast, shall not be so well fed as they are now, *We both hunger and thirst, and are naked*, 1. Cor. iv. 11. Then they shall keep many more religious fasts, than they do now, for providence will call them to it, they will then serve the Lord with fastings, Acts. xiii. 2.

7. It was a wonder of his grace that he proportioned their exercises to their strength. He would not put new cloth upon an old garment, *ver. 36*, nor new wine into old bottles, *ver. 37, 38*. Would not as soon as ever he had called them out of the world, put upon them the strictness and austerities of discipleship, lest they should be tempted to fly on: When God brought Israel out of Egypt, he would not bring them by the way of the Philistines, lest they should repent when they saw war, and return into Egypt, *Exod. xiii. 17*. So Christ would train up his followers gradually to the discipline of his family; for no man having drunk old wine, will of a sudden straightway desire new, or relish it, but will say the old is better, because he has been used to it, *ver. 39*. The disciples will be tempted to think their old way of living better till they are by degrees trained up to this way wherein to they are called: or turn it the other way; let them be accustomed awhile to religious exercises, and then they will abound in them as much as you do, but we must not be too hasty with them. Calvin takes it as an admonition to the Pharisees not to boast of their fasting, and the noise and show they made with it, nor to despise his disciples because they did not in like manner signalize themselves; for the profession the Pharisees made, was indeed pompous and gay, like new wine that is brisk and sparkling, whereas all wise men say the old is better; which though it does not give its colour so well in the cup, yet is more warming in the stomach and more wholesome. Christ's disciples, though they had not so much of the form of godliness, yet they had more of the power of it.

C H A P. VI.

In this chapter we have Christ's exposition of the moral law, which he came not to destroy but to fulfil, and to fill up his gospel. (1.) Here is a proof of the lawfulness of works of necessity and mercy on the sabbath day; the former in vindication of his disciples plucking the ears of corn, the latter in vindication of himself healing the withered hand on that day, *ver. 1—11*. (2.) His retirement for secret prayer, *ver. 12*. (3.) His calling his twelve apostles, *ver. 13—16*. (4.) His curing the multitudes of those under various diseases, who made their application, to him, *ver. 17—19*. (5.) The sermon that he preached to his disciples and the multitude, instructing them in their duty both to God and man, *ver. 20—49*.

1. AND it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn-fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands. 2. and certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days? 3. And Jesus answering them, said, have ye not read so much as this what David did, when himself was an hungered, and they which were with him: 4. How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shew-bread, and gave also to them that were with him, which it is not lawful to eat, but for the priests alone? 5. And he said unto them, that the Son of man is LORD also of the sabbath. 6. And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught; and there was a man whose right hand was withered. 7. And the Scribes and Pharisees watched him whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him. 8. But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose, and stood forth. 9. Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing, Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good or to do evil? to save life or to destroy it? 10. And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so; and his hand was restored whole as the other. 11. And they were filled with madness: and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

Thes

These two passages of story we had both in Matthew and Mark, and they were there laid together, *Matt. xii. 1. Mark ii. 23.*—iii. 1. because though happening at some distance of time from each other, yet both were designed to rectify the mistakes of the Scribes and Pharisees concerning the sabbath-day, on the *bodily rest* of which they laid greater stress, and required greater strictness than the lawgiver intended. Here,

1. Christ justifies his disciples in a *work of necessity* for themselves on that day; and that was *plucking the ears of corn* when they were hungry on that day. This story here has a date, which we had not in the other evangelists, it was on the *second sabbath after the first*, ver. 1. that is, as Dr. Whitby thinks pretty clear, the *first sabbath after the second day of unleavened bread*, from which day they reckoned the *seven weeks* to the feast of Pentecost; the first of which they called *Σαββατον δουρατοεργασίας*, the second *δουρατοεργασίας*, and so on. Blessed be God we need not be critical in this matter: Whether this circumstance be mentioned to intimate that this sabbath was thought to have some peculiar honour upon it, which aggravated the offence of the disciples; or only to intimate, that being the first sabbath after the offering of the first fruits, it was the time of the year when corn was near ripe, is not material. We may observe,

(1.) Christ's disciples ought not to be nice and curious in their diet, not at any time, especially not on sabbath days, but take up with what is easiest got, and be thankful. These disciples *plucked the ears of corn, and did eat*, ver. 1. a little served them, and that which had no delicacy in it.

(2.) Many that are themselves guilty of the greatest crimes, are forward to censure others for the most innocent and inoffensive actions, ver. 2. The Pharisees quarrelled with them as doing that which was *not lawful to do on the sabbath days*, when it was their own practice to feed deliciously on sabbath days more than on all other days.

(3.) Jesus Christ will justify his disciples when they are unjustly censured, and will own and accept of them in many a thing, which men tell them *it is not lawful for them to do*: How well is it for us that men are not to be our judges, and Christ will be our advocate!

(4.) Ceremonial appointments may be dispensed with in cases of necessity; as the appropriating of the shew-bread to the priests was dispensed with, when David was by providence brought into such a strait, that he must either have that or none, ver. 3, 4. And if God's own appointment might be thus set aside for a greater good, much more may the traditions of men.

(5.) Works of necessity are particularly allowable on the sabbath-day; but we must take heed that we turn not this liberty into licentiousness, and abuse God's favourable concessions and condescensions to the prejudice of the work of the day.

(6.) Jesus Christ, though he allowed works of necessity on the sabbath-day, yet will have us to know and remember that it is his day, and therefore is to be spent in his service, and to his honour, ver. 5. *The son of man is Lord also of the sabbath*, i. e. In the kingdom of the Redeemer, the sabbath-day is turned into a *Lord's day*; the propriety of it is in some respects, to be altered, and it is to be observed chiefly in honour of the Redeemer, as it had been before in honour of the creator, (*Jer. xvi. 14, 15.*) and in token of this, it shall not only have a new name, the *Lord's day*, (yet not forgetting the old, for it is a sabbath of rest still) but shall be transferred to a new day, the first day of the week.

2. He justifies himself in doing *works of mercy* for others on the sabbath-day. Observe in this,

1. That Christ on the sabbath-day *entered into the synagogue*. Note, It is our duty, as we have an opportunity to sanctify sabbaths in religious assemblies: On the sabbath there ought to be a *holy convocation*; and that our place must not be empty without very good reason.

2. In the synagogue on the sabbath-day he *taught*. Giving and receiving instruction from Christ is very proper work for a sabbath-day, and for a synagogue. Christ took all opportunities to teach not only his disciples but the multitude.

3. That Christ's patient was one of his hearers: There was a man whose *right hand was withered*, he came to learn from Christ; whether he had any expectation to be healed by him doth not appear: But those that would be cured by the grace of Christ, must be willing to learn the doctrine of Christ.

4. That among those that were the hearers of Christ's excellent doctrine, and the eye-witnesses of his glorious miracles, there were some who came with no other design but to pick quarrels with him, ver. 7. The Scribes and Pharisees would not, as became generous adversaries, give him fair warning, that if he did heal on the sabbath-day, they would construe it a violation of the fourth commandment, which they ought in honour and justice to have done, because it was a case *without precedent*, none having ever cured as he did, and therefore could not be an adjudged case; but basely watched him, as the lion doth his prey, whether he would *heal on the sabbath-day*, that they might find an accusation against him, and surprise him with a prosecution.

5. That Jesus Christ was neither *ashamed* nor *afraid* to own the purposes of his grace, in the face of those who he knew confronted them, ver. 8. *He knew their thoughts*, and what they designed, and he bid the man *rise and stand forth*, hereby to try the patient's faith and boldness.

6. He appealed to his adversaries themselves, and to the convictions of natural conscience, whether it was the design of the fourth commandment to restrain men from doing good on the sabbath-day, that good which their hands find to do which they had an opportunity for, and which cannot so well be put off to another time, ver. 9. *Is it lawful to do good or evil on the sabbath-days?* No wicked men are such absurd and unreasonable men as persecutors are, who study to do evil to men for doing good.

7. He healed the poor man, and restored him to the present use of his right hand with a word's speaking, though he knew his enemies would not only take offence at it, but take advantage against him for it, ver. 10. Let us not be drawn off either from our duty or usefulness by the oppression we meet with in it.

8. His adversaries were hereby enraged so much the more against him, ver. 11. instead of being convinced by this miracle as they ought to have been, that he was a teacher come from God; instead of being brought to be in love with him as a benefactor of mankind, they were *filled with madness*, vexed that they could not frighten him from doing good, nor hinder the growth of his interest in the affections of the people. They were *mad* at Christ, *mad* at the people, *mad* at themselves: Anger is a short madness, malice is a long one: impotent malice especially, disappointed malice, such was their's. When they could not prevent his working this miracle, they *communed one with another what they might do to Jesus*, what other way they might take to run him down. We may well stand amazed at it, that the sons of men should be so wicked as to do thus, and that the son of God should be so patient as to suffer it.

12. And it came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. 13. ¶ And when it was day he called

unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom he also named apostles: 14. Simon whom he also named Peter, and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew. 15. Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon called Zelotes. 15. And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor. 17. ¶ And he came down with them and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases: 18. And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed. 19. And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him and healed them all.

In these verses we have our Lord Jesus in *secret*, in his *family*, and in *public*, and in all three acting like himself.

1. In *secret* we have him praying to God, ver. 12. This evangelist takes frequent notice of Christ's retirements, to give us an example of secret prayer, by which we must keep up our communion with God daily, and without which it is impossible the soul should prosper. In those days, when his enemies were filled with madness against him, and were contriving what to do to him, he went out to pray that he might answer the type of David, *Psal. civ. 4. For my love they are my adversaries, but I give myself unto prayer*. Observe, (1.) He was alone with God: he *went out into a mountain to pray*, where we might have no disturbance or interruption given him; we are never less alone, than when we are thus alone. Whether there was any convenient place built upon this mountain for devout people to retire to for their private devotions, as some think, and that that *oratory or place of prayer* is meant here by *ἡ περὶ τὴν ὄρεν*, to me very uncertain: He went into a mountain for privacy, and therefore probably would not go to a place frequented by others. (2.) He was long alone with God; he continued all night in prayer. We think one half hour a great deal to spend in the duties of the closet, but Christ continued a whole night in meditation and secret prayer. We have a great deal of business at the throne of grace, and we should take a great delight in communion with God, and by both those may be kept sometimes long at prayer.

2. In his *family* we have him nominating his immediate attendants, that should be the constant auditors of his doctrine, and eye-witnesses of his miracles, that hereafter they might be sent forth as apostles, his messengers to the world to preach his gospel to it, and plant his church in it, ver. 13. After he had continued all night in prayer, one would have thought that when it was day he should have reposed himself, and got some sleep: No, as soon as any body was stirring, he called unto him his disciples. In serving God our great cure should be not to lose time, but to make the end of one good duty the beginning of another. Ministers are to be ordained with prayer more than ordinarily solemn. The number of Apostles was twelve; their names are here recorded, and it is the *third time* we have met with them, and in each of the three places, the *order* of them differs; to teach both ministers and Christians not to be nice in precedence, not in giving it, much less in taking it, but looking upon it as a thing not worth taking notice of, let it be as it lights. He that in Mark was called Thaddeus, in Matthew, Lebheus, whose surname was Thaddeus, is here called *Judas the brother of James*, the same that wrote the epistle of Jude; Simon that in Matthew and Mark, was called the Canaanite, is here called Simon Zelotes, perhaps for his great zeal and religion. Concerning these twelve here named, we have reason to say as the queen of Sheba did of Solomon's servants, *Happy are thy men, and happy are these thy servants that stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom*; never were men so privileged, and yet one of them had a devil, and proved a traitor, ver. 16. yet Christ, when he chose him was not deceived in him.

3. In *public* we have him *preaching* and *healing*, the two great works between which he divided his time, ver. 17. He came down with the twelve from the mountain, and stood in the plain, ready to receive those that resorted to him, and there were presently gathered about him, not only the company of his disciples who used to attend him, but also a great multitude of people, a mixt multitude out of all Judea and Jerusalem, though it was some scores of miles from Jerusalem, to that part of Galilee where Christ now was; though at Jerusalem they had abundance of famous rabbins that had great names, and bore a mighty sway, yet they came to hear Christ. They came also from the *sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon*, though they who lived there were generally men of business, and though they bordered upon Canaanites, yet here were some well-affected to Christ, such there were dispersed in all parts, here and there one.

1. They came to hear him, and he *preached to them*. Those that have not good preaching near them, had better travel far for it than be without it. It is worth while to go a great way to hear the word of Christ, and to go out of the way of other business for it.

2. They came to be *cured* by him, and he *healed* them; some were troubled in body, and some in mind: some had *diseases*, some had *devils*, but both the one and the other upon their application to Christ were healed, for he has power over diseases and devils, ver. 17, 18. over the effects and over the causes. Nay, it should seem those that have no particular diseases to complain of, yet found it a great confirmation and renovation of their bodily health and vigour, to partake of the virtue that went out of him; for, ver. 19. *the whole multitude sought to touch him*, those that were in health as well as those that were sick, and they were all one way or other the better for him, he *healed them all*; and who is there that doth not need upon some account or other to be *healed*: Note, There is a *fulness of grace* in Christ, and healing virtue in him, and ready to go out from him, that is enough for all, enough for each.

20. ¶ And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, blessed be the poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. 21. Blessed are ye that hunger now for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. 22. Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. 23. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for behold, your reward

reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets. 24. But woe unto you that are rich; for ye have received your consolation. 25. Woe unto you that are full: for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now: for ye shall mourn and weep. 26. Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

Here begins a practical discourse of Christ, which is continued to the end of the chapter, most of which is found in the *sermon on the mount*. Matt. v. and vii. Some think this was preached at some other time and place, and there are other instances of Christ's preaching the same things or to the same purpose at different times; but it is probable, that this is only the Evangelist's abridgment of that sermon, and perhaps that in Matthew too is but an abridgment: the beginning and the conclusion is much the same; and the story of the cure of the centurion's servant follows presently upon it, both there and here, but it is not material.

In these verses we have,

1. Blessings pronounced upon *suffering saints*, as *happy people* though the world *pities them*, ver. 20. He *lifted up his eyes upon his disciples*, and only the *twelve* but the whole *company of them*, ver. 17. and directed his discourse to them. For when he had healed the sick in the plain, he went *again to the mountain* to preach; there he sat, as one having authority; and thither they came to him Matt. v. 1. and to them he directed his discourse, to them he applied it, and taught them to apply it to themselves. When he had laid it down for a truth, *Blessed are the poor in spirit*, he added, *Blessed are ye poor*. All believers that take the precepts of the gospel to themselves, and *live by them*, may take the promises of the gospel to themselves, and *live upon them*. And the application, as it is here, seems especially designed to encourage the disciples, with reference to the hardships and difficulties they were likely to meet with in following Christ.

1. You are *poor*, you have *left all to follow me*, are content to live upon alms with me, are never to expect any worldly preferment in my service: you must work hard, and fare hard as poor people do, but you are blessed in your poverty, it shall be no prejudice at all to your happiness; nay, you are blessed for it, all your losses shall be abundantly made up to you, for *yours is the kingdom of God*; and all the comforts and graces of his kingdom here, and all the glories and joys of his kingdom hereafter; *yours it shall be*, nay *yours it is*. Christ's *poor are rich in faith*, James ii. 5.

2. You *hunger now*, ver. 21. you are not *fed to the full* as others are, many times *rife hungry*, your *commons are so short*; or are so intent upon your work, that you have not time to eat bread, are glad of a few ears of corn, for a meal's meat: thus you hunger now in this world, but in the other world *you shall be filled*, shall *hunger no more*, nor *thirst any more*.

3. You *weep now*, are often in tears, tears of repentance, tears of sympathy, you are of them that mourn in Zion. But *blessed are ye*, your present sorrows are no *prejudices* to, but *preparatories* for your future joy, *ye shall laugh*. You have triumphs in reserve, you are but *winning in tears*, and shall shortly *reap in joy*, Psal. cxxvi. 5, 6. They that now *sorrow after a godly sort*, are *treasuring up comforts* for themselves, or rather God is *treasuring up comfort* for them; and the day is coming when their *mouth shall be filled with laughing*, and their *lips with rejoicing*. Job. viii. 21.

4. You now undergo the world's ill will, you must expect all the base treatment that a spiteful world can give you for Christ's sake, because you serve him and his interest, you must expect that wicked men will hate you because your doctrine and life convicts and condemns them; and those that have church power in their hands will separate you, will force you to separate yourselves, and then excommunicate you for so doing, and lay you under the most *ignominious* censures, will pronounce anathemas against you, as *scandalous* and *incorrigible* offenders; and will do this with all possible gravity and solemnity, and the pomp and pageantry of appeals to heaven, to make the world believe, and almost you yourselves too, that it is ratified in heaven: thus will they endeavour to make you odious to others, and a terror to yourselves. 'This is supposed to be the proper notion of *ἀποστρέφω*, they shall cast you out of their synagogues. And they that have not this power, will not fail to shew their malice to the utmost of their power, for they shall reproach you, shall charge you with the blackest crimes, which you are perfectly innocent of, shall fasten upon you the blackest characters which you do not deserve; they shall cast out your name as evil, your name as Christians, as apostles, they shall do all they can to render these names odious. This is the application of the eighth beatitude, Matt. v. 10, 11, 12.

Such usage as this seems hard, but *blessed are ye* when ye are so used; it is so far from depriving you of your happiness, that it will greatly add to it; it is an honour to you, as it is to a brave hero to be employed in the wars, in the service of his prince, and therefore *rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy*, ver. 23. Do not only bear it, but triumph in it, For, 1. You are hereby *highly dignified in the kingdom of grace*, for you are treated as the prophets were before you, and therefore not only need not be ashamed of it but may justly rejoice in it, for it will be an evidence for you that you *walk in the same spirit and in the same steps*, are engaged in the same cause, and employed in the same service with them. 2. You will for this be abundantly *recompensed in the kingdom of glory*, not only your services for Christ, but your sufferings will come into the account; *your reward is great in heaven*. Venture upon your sufferings in a full belief that the glory of heaven will abundantly counteract all these hardships; so that though you may be losers for Christ, you shall not be losers by him in the end.

Woes denounced against *prospering sinners as miserable people*, though the world *envies them*. There we had not in Matthew. It should seem the best exposition of *these woes* compared with the foregoing *blessings*, is the parable of the rich man and Lazarus; Lazarus had the blessedness of those that are poor and hunger, and weep now, for in Abraham's bosom all the promises made to them who did so, were made good to him; but the rich man had the woes that follow here, as he had the character of those on whom those woes are entailed.

1. Here is a *woe* to them that are *rich*, that is, that *trust in riches*, that have abundance of this world's wealth, and instead of serving God with it, serve their lusts with it; woe to them for they have received their consolation, that which they placed their happiness in, and were willing to take up with for a portion, ver. 24. They in their lifetime received their good things, which in their account were the best things, and all the good things they are ever likely to receive from God. You that are rich are in temptation to set your hearts upon a smiling world, and to say, *Soul take thine ease in the embraces of it, This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell*; and then woe unto you. (1.) It is the *folly of carnal worldlings* that they make the things of this world their consolation, which were only intended for their convenience; they please themselves with them, pride themselves in them, and make them their heaven upon earth; and to them the consolations of God are small and of no account. (2.) It is their misery that they are put off with them

as their consolation; let them know it to their terror, when they are parted from those things, there is an end of all their comfort, a final end of it, and nothing remains to them but everlasting misery and torment.

3. Here is a *woe* to them that are *full*, ver. 25. that are *fed to the full*, and have more than heart could wish, Psal. lxxiii. 7. that have their bellies filled with the *hid treasures of this world*, Psal. xvii. 14. that when they have abundance of these are *full*, and think they have enough, they need no more, they desire no more, Rev. iii. 17. Now ye are full, now ye are rich. 1. Cor. iv. 8. they are *full of themselves* without God and Christ, woe to such for they shall hunger, they shall shortly be *stripped and emptied* of all those things they are proud of; and when they shall have left behind them in the world, all those things which are their fulness, they shall carry away with them such appetites and desires, as the world they remove to will afford them no gratifications of it; for all the delights of sense, which they are now so full of, will in hell be denied, and in heaven superseded.

Here is a *woe* to them that *laugh now*, that have always a disposition to be merry, and always something to make merry with; that know no other joy out that which is carnal and sensual, and know no other use of this world's good, but purely to indulge that carnal sensual joy, that banishes sorrow, even godly sorrow, from their minds, and are always entertaining themselves with the laughter of the fool; woe unto such, for it is but now, for a little time that they laugh, they shall mourn and weep shortly, shall mourn and weep eternally, in a world where there is nothing but weeping and wailing, sadness, selfishness, and remediless sorrow.

4. Here is a *woe* to them whom all men speak well of, i. e. that make it their great and only care to gain the praise and applause of men, that value themselves by that more than by the favour of God and his acceptance, ver. 26. Woe unto you, i. e. it would be a bad sign that you were not faithful to your trust, and to the souls of men, if you preached so that no body would be disgusted; for your business is to tell people of their faults, and if you be in like manner cried up, you will be justly suspected to deal deceitfully as they did. We would desire to have the approbation of those that are wise and good, and not be indifferent what people say of us; but as we should despise the reproaches, so we should also despise the praises of the fools in Israel.

27. ¶ But I say unto you, which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you: 28. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, 29. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other: and him that taketh away thy cloke, forbid not to take thy coat also 30. Give to every man that asketh of thee: and of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again. 31. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. 32. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye, for sinners also love those that love them. 33. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. 34. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. 35. But love ye your enemies and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest; for he is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil. 36. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

These verses agree pretty much with Matt. v. 38. to the end of that chapter: I say unto you which hear, ver. 27. to all you that hear, and not to disciples only, for these are lessons of universal concern. He that has an ear let him hear. Those that diligently hearken to Christ, shall find he has something to say to them well worth their hearing. Now the lessons Christ here teacheth us are,

1. That we must render to all their due, and be honest and just in all our dealings, ver. 31. As you would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise, for this is *loving our neighbour as ourselves*; what we would expect in reason to be done to us, either in justice or charity by others, if they were in our condition and we in theirs, that as the matter stands, we must do to them. We must put our souls into their souls' stead, and then pity and succour them, as we would desire and justly expect to be ourselves pitied and succoured.

2. That we must be free in giving to them that need, ver. 30. Give to every man that asketh of thee, to every one that is a proper object of charity, that wants necessities, which thou hast wherewithal to supply out of thy superfluities. Give to those that are not able to help themselves, to those that have not relations in a capacity to help them. Christ would have his disciples ready to distribute, and willing to communicate to their power in ordinary cases, and beyond their power in extraordinary.

2. That we must be generous in forgiving those that have been any way injurious to us.

1. We must not be extreme in demanding our right, when it is denied us. Him that taketh away thy cloke, either forcibly or fraudulently, forbid him not by any violent means to take thy coat also, ver. 29. Let him have that too, rather than fight for it. And, ver. 30. of him that taketh thy goods, so Dr. Hammond thinks it should be read, that borrows them or that takes them up from thee upon trust, of such do not exact them; if providence have made such insolvent, do not take the advantage of the law against them, but rather lose it, than take them by the throat, Matt. xviii. 28. If a man run away in thy debt, and take away thy goods with him, do not perplex thyself, nor be incensed against him.

2. We must not be rigorous in revenging a wrong when it is done us; unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek instead of bringing an action against him, or sending for a writ for him, or bringing him before justice, offer also the other; i. e. pass it by, though thereby thou wouldest be in danger of bringing upon thyself another like indignity; which is commonly pretended in excuse of taking the advantage of the law in such a case, If any one smite thee on the cheek, rather than give another blow to him, be ready to receive another from him; that is leave it to God to plead thy cause, and do thou sit down silent under the affront; and when we do thus, God will smite our enemies, as far as they are his, upon the cheek bone, so as to break the teeth of the ungodly, Psal. iii. 7. for he hath said Vengeance is mine, and he will make it appear that it is so when we leave it to him to take vengeance.

3. Nay, we must *do good to them that do evil to us*. This is that which our Saviour in these verses chiefly designs to teach us, as a law peculiar to his religion, and a branch of the perfection of it.

1. We must be kind to those from whom we have *received injuries*. We must not only *love our enemies*, and bear a good will to them, but we must *do good to them*, be as ready to do any good office to them as to any other person, if their case calls for it, and if it be in the power of our hands to do it. We must study to make it appear by positive acts, if there be any opportunity for them, that we bear them no malice, nor seek revenge. Do they *curse us*, speak ill of us, and wish ill to us? Do they *despitefully use us* in word or deed? Do they endeavour to make us contemptible or odious? Let us *bless them* and *pray for them*, speak well of them, the best we can, wish well to them especially to their souls, and be intercessors with God for them. This is repeated, *ver. 35. Love ye your enemies and do them good*. To recommend this difficult duty to us, it is represented as a generous thing, and an attainment few arrive to. *To love those that love us* has nothing uncommon in it, nothing peculiar to Christ's disciples, for *sinners will love those that love them*, there is nothing self-denying in that, it is but following nature even in its corrupt state, and puts no force at all upon it, *ver. 32. it is no thanks to us to love those that say and do just as we would have them*. And, *ver. 32. if ye do good to them which do good to you*, and return their kindnesses, it is from a common principle of custom, honour and gratitude, and therefore *what thank have ye?* What credit are ye to the name of Christ, or what reputation do you bring to it? for *sinners also* that know nothing of Christ and his doctrine *do even the same*. But it becomes you to do something more excellent and eminent, herein to out-do your neighbours, to do that which sinners will not do, and which no principle of theirs can pretend to reach to, you must *render good for evil*; not that any thanks is due to us, but then we are to our God *for a name and a praise*. And he will have the thanks.

2. We must be kind to those from whom we expect no manner of advantage, *ver. 35. lend, hoping for nothing again*. It is meant of the rich lending to the poor a little money for their necessity, to buy daily bread for themselves and their families, or to keep them out of prison: in such a case we must *lend* with a resolution not to demand interest for what we lend, as we may most justly from those that borrow money to make purchases withal, or to trade with; but that is not all, we must *lend*, though we have reason to suspect that what we *lend* we *lose*. Lend to those that are so poor, that it is not probable they will be able to pay us again. This precept will be best illustrated by that law of Moses, *Deut. xv. 7, 8, 9, 10*, which obliges them to lend to a *poor brother* as much as he needed though the *year of release* was at hand.

Here are two motives to this generous charity.

1. It will redound to our profit, for our *reward shall be great*, *ver. 35. what is given, or laid out, or lent and lost on earth, from a true principle of charity, it will be made up to us in the other world, unspeakably to our advantage*. You shall not only be *repaid*, but *rewarded*, greatly rewarded; it will be said to you, *Come ye blessed, inherit the kingdom*.

2. It will redound to our honour, for herein we shall resemble God in his goodness, which is the greatest glory. *Ye shall be the children of the High-est*; shall be owned by him as his children being like him. It is the glory of God that he is *kind to the unthankful and to the evil*; bestows the gifts of common providence even on the worst of men, who are every day provoking him and rebelling against him, and using those very gifts to his dishonour. Hence he infers, *ver. 36. Be merciful as your Father is merciful*; this explains, *Matt. v. 48. Be perfect as your Father is perfect*. Imitate your Father in those things that are his brightest perfections. Those that are *merciful* as God is *merciful*: so he is graciously pleased to accept it though infinitely fallen short. Charity is called the *bond of perfectness*, *Col. iii. 14*. And this should strongly engage us to be merciful to our brethren, even such as have been injurious to us; not only that God is so to others, but that he is so to us, though we have been, and are evil and unthankful: it is of his mercies that we are not consumed.

37. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: 38. Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again. 39. And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch? 40. The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. 41. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 42. Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye. 43. For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit: neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 44. For every tree is known by his own fruit: for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-bush gather they grapes. 45. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good: and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil; for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. 46. ¶ And why call ye me LORD, LORD, and do not the things which I say? 47. Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings and doth them, I will shew you to whom he is like; 48. He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. 49. But he that heareth and doeth not, is like a man that

without a foundation built an house upon the earth, against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.

All these sayings of Christ we had before in Matthew, some of them *chap. vii.* others in other places. They were sayings Christ often used, they needed only to be mentioned, it was easy to apply them. Grotius thinks we need not be critical here in seeking for the coherence; they are golden sentences, like Solomon's proverbs or parables. Let us observe here,

1. That we ought to be very *candid* in our censures of others, because we need grains of allowance ourselves: therefore *judge not others*, because then you yourselves *shall not be judged*: therefore *condemn not others*, because then you yourselves *shall not be condemned*, *ver. 37.* exercise towards others that charity which *thinketh no evil*, which *bears all things, believes and hopes all things*, and then others will exercise that charity towards you. God will not *judge and condemn* you, men will not. They that are merciful to other people's names, shall find others merciful to theirs.

2. That if we are of a *giving*, and a *forgiving* spirit we shall ourselves reap the benefit of it; *for give, and ye shall be forgiven*. They that forgive others injuries others will forgive them their inadvertencies. They that forgive others trespasses against them, God will forgive them their trespasses against him. And he will be no less mindful of the *liberal* that *devise liberal things*, *ver. 38.* Give, and it shall be given to you. God in his providence will recompence it to you: it is *lent* to him, and *he is not unrighteous to forget it*, *Heb. vi. 10.* but he will pay it again. Men shall *return it into your bosom*; for God makes use of men many times as instruments, not only of his *avenging* but of his *rewarding* justice. If we in a right manner give to others when they need, God will incline the hearts of others to give to us when we need, and to give *liberally good measure pressed down and shaken together*. They that *sow plentifully* shall *reap plentifully*. Whom God recompenseth he *abundantly* recompenseth.

3. That we must expect to be dealt with ourselves as we deal with others, *With the same measure that ye mete, it shall be measured to you again*. Those that deal *hardly* with others, must acknowledge as Adoni-bezek did, *Judges i. 7.* that God is righteous, if others deal hardly with them, and they may expect to be paid in their own coin; but they that deal *kindly* with others, have reason to hope that when they have occasion, God will raise them up friends that will deal kindly with them. Though providence doth not always go by this rule, because the full and exact retributions are reserved for another world, yet ordinarily it observes a proportion sufficient to deter us from acts of rigour, and to encourage us in all acts of beneficence.

4. That those who put themselves under the conduct of the ignorant, and erroneous, are likely to perish with them, *ver. 39. Can the blind lead the blind?* Can the Pharisees that are blinded with pride and prejudice, and bigotry *lead the blind* people into the right way, *shall not both fall together into the ditch?* How can they expect any other? Those that are led by the common opinion, course and custom of this world, are themselves blind, and are led by the blind, and will perish with the world that *sits in darkness*. They that ignorantly and at a venture *follow the multitude to do evil*, follow the blind in the broad way that leads the many to *destruction*.

5. That Christ's followers cannot expect better treatment in the world than their Master had, *ver. 40.* Let them not promise themselves more, honour or pleasure in the world than Christ had, nor aim at that worldly pomp and grandeur which he never was ambitious of, but always declined; not affect that power in secular things which he would not assume: but every one that would show himself *perfect*, an established disciple, let him be *as his Master*, dead to the world and every thing in it as his Master is; let him live a life of labour and self-denial, as his Master doth, and make himself a servant of all; let him stoop, and let him toil, and do all the good he can, and then he will be a complete disciple.

6. That those who take upon them to rebuke and reform others, are concerned to look to it, that they be themselves blameless and harmless and without rebuke, *ver. 41; 42.* (1.) Those with a very ill grace censure the faults of others who are not aware of their own faults. It is very absurd for any to pretend to be so quick-sighted, as to spy small faults in others, like a mote in the eye, when they are themselves so perfectly past feeling, as not to perceive a *beam in their own eye*. (2.) Those are altogether unfit to help to reform others, whose reforming charity doth not begin at home. How canst thou offer thy service to thy brother to *pull out the mote from his eye*, which requires a good eye as well as a good hand, when thou thyself hast a *beam in thine own eye*, and makest no complaint of it? (3.) Those therefore that would be serviceable to the souls of others must first make it appear that they are solicitous about their own souls. To help to pull the mote out of our brother's eye is a good work, but then we must qualify ourselves for it by beginning with ourselves: and our reforming our own lives may, by the influence of example, contribute to others reforming theirs.

7. That we may expect men's words and actions will be according as they are, according as their hearts are, and according as their principles are.

1. The heart is the *tree* and the words and actions are fruits according to the nature of the tree, *ver. 43, 44.* If a man be really a *good man*, if he has a principle of grace in his heart, and the prevailing bent and bias of the soul be towards God and heaven, though perhaps he may not abound in fruit, though some of his fruits be blasted, and though he may be sometimes like a tree in winter, yet he doth not *bring forth corrupt fruit*, though he may not do you all the good he should, yet he will not in any material instance do you hurt. If he cannot reform ill manners, he will not *corrupt good manners*. If the fruit that a man brings forth be *corrupt*, if a man's conversation tends to debauch the mind and devotion, if a man's conversation be vicious, if he be a drunkard or a fornicator, if he be a swearer or liar, if he be in any instance unjust and unnatural, his *fruit is corrupt*, and you may be sure he is not a *good tree*. On the other hand, a *corrupt tree doth not bring forth good fruit*, though he may bring forth green leaves, *for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble do they gather grapes*. You may if you please stick figs upon thorns, and hang a bunch of grapes on a bramble, but they neither are, nor can be the natural product of the trees, so neither can you expect any *good carriage* from those that have justly an *ill character*. If the fruit be good you may conclude the tree is so; if the conversation be holy and heavenly and regular, though you cannot infallibly know the heart you yet may charitably hope that that is upright with God, for *every tree is known by its own fruit*; But the *vile person will speak villainy*, *Isaiah xxxii. 6.* and the experience of the moderns herein agrees with the *proverb of the ancients*, that *wickedness proceeded from the wicked*, *1 Sam. xxiv. 13.*

2. The heart is the *treasure*, and the words and actions are the expences or produce from that treasure, *ver. 35.* This we had, *Matt. xii. 34, 35.* The reigning love of God and Christ in the heart denominates a man, a *good man*,

man, and it is a good treasure in the heart, it enricheth a man, it furnisheth him with a good stock to spend upon, for the benefit of others; out of such a good treasure a man may bring forth that which is good; but where the love of the world and the flesh reign, there is an evil treasure in the heart, out of which an evil man is continually bringing forth that which is evil, and by what is brought forth, you may know what is in the heart; as you may know what is in the vessel, water or wine, by what is drawn out from it, John ii. 8. *Of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks*; what the mouth doth ordinarily speak, doth speak with relish and delight, generally agrees with what is innermost and uppermost in the heart; *he that speaks of the earth, is earthly*, John iii. 31. not but what a good man may possibly drop an ill word, and a wicked man make use of a good word to serve an ill turn: but for the most part the heart is as the words are, *vain or serious*; it therefore concerns us to get our hearts filled not only with good, but with abundance of it.

8. That it is not enough to hear the sayings of Christ, but we must do them; not enough to profess relation to him, as his servants, but we must make conscience of obeying him.

1. It is putting an *affront upon him* to call him *Lord, Lord*, as if we were wholly at his command and had devoted ourselves to his service, if we do not make conscience of conforming to his will, and serving the interests of his kingdom. We do but mock Christ as they that in scorn said, *Hail, King of the Jews*, if we call him ever so often, *Lord, Lord*, and yet walk in the way of our own hearts, and in the light of our own eyes. Why do we call him *Lord, Lord* in prayer, (compare Matt. vii. 21, 22.) if we do not obey his commands: He that *turns away his ear from hearing the law, his prayer shall be an abomination*.

2. It is putting a cheat upon ourselves, if we think that a bare profession of religion will save us, that hearing the sayings of Christ will bring us to heaven without doing them. This he illustrates by a similitude, ver. 47, 48, 49, which shews,

1. That those only make sure work for their souls and eternity, and take the course that will stand them in stead in a trying time, who do not only come to Christ as his scholars, and hear his sayings, but do them; who think and speak and act in every thing according to the established rules of his holy religion. They are like a house built on a rock; there are they that take pains in religion as they do that build on a rock; that begin low, as they do that dig deep; that found their hope upon Christ who is the rock of ages, and other foundations can no man lay: these are they who provide for hereafter, who get ready for the worst, who lay up in store a good foundation for the time to come, for the eternity to come, 1 Tim. vi. 19. They that do thus, do well for themselves; for, (1.) They shall keep their integrity in times of temptation and persecution; when others fall from their own seditions, as the seed on the stony ground, they shall stand fast in the Lord. (2.) They shall keep their comfort and peace and hope and joy in the midst of the greatest distresses. The storms and streams of affliction shall not shock them, for their feet are set upon a rock, a rock higher than they. (3.) Their everlasting welfare is secured. In death and judgment they are safe. Obedient believers are kept by the power of Christ through faith unto salvation, and shall never perish.

2. That those who rest in a bare hearing of the sayings of Christ, and do not live up to them, are but preparing for a fatal disappointment. He that heareth and doth not, that knows his duty, but lives in the neglect of it; he is like a man that built a house without a foundation. He pleaseth himself with hopes that he has no ground for, and his hopes will fail him when he most needs the comfort of them, and when he expects the crowning of them, when the stream beats vehemently upon his house, it is gone, the fund it is built upon is washed away, and immediately it falls. Such is the hope of the hypocrite, though he has gained, when God takes away his soul; it is as the spider's web, and the giving up of the ghost.

CHAP. VII.

In this chapter we have, (1.) Christ's confirming the doctrine he had preached in the former chapter with two glorious miracles, the curing of one at a distance, and that was the centurion's servant, ver. 1—10. and the raising of one to life that was dead, the widow's son of Nain, ver. 11—18. (2.) Christ confirming the faith of John, who was now in prison, and of some his disciples, by sending him a short account of the miracles he wrought, in answer to a question he received from him, ver. 19—23. To which he adds an honourable testimony concerning John, and a just reproof to the men of that generation for the contempt they put upon him and his doctrine, ver. 24—35. (3.) Christ comforting a poor penitent that applied herself to him, all in tears of godly sorrow for sin, assuring her that her sins were pardoned; and justifying himself in the favour he shewed her against the cavils of a proud Pharisee, ver. 36—50.

1. NOW when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum. 2. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. 3. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. 4. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this. 5. For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. 6. Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, LORD, trouble not thyself, for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof. 7. Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. 8. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth: and to another, Come and he cometh: and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. 9. When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. 10. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

Some difference there is between this story of the cure of the centurion's servant, as it is related here, and as we had it, Matt. viii. 5, &c. for there it was said, that the centurion came to Christ, here it is said, that he sent to him first some of the elders of the Jews, ver. 3. and afterwards some other friends, ver. 6. But it is a rule, that we are said to do that, which we do by another: *Quod facimus per alium, id ipsum facere judicamus*. The centurion might be said to do that which he did by his proxies; as a man takes possession by his attorney. But it is probable the centurion himself came at last, when Christ said to him, Matt. vii. 13. *as thou hast believed; so be it done unto thee*.

This miracle is here said to have been wrought by our Lord Jesus, when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, ver. 1. What Christ said he said publicly; whoever would might come and hear him; in secret have I said nothing, John xviii. 20. Now to give an undeniable proof of the authority of his preaching word, he here gives an incontestible proof of the power and efficacy of his healing word. He that had such a commanding empire in the kingdom of nature, as that he could command away diseases no doubt has such a sovereignty in the kingdom of grace, as to enjoin duties displeasing to flesh and blood, and bind under the highest penalties to the observance of them. This miracle was wrought in Capernaum, where most of Christ's mighty works were done, Matt. xi. 23.

Now observe,

1. That the centurion's servant that was sick was dear to his master, ver. 2. It was the praise of the servant, that by his diligence and faithfulness, and a manifest concern for his master and for his interest, as for himself and for his own, he recommended himself to his master's esteem and love. Servants should study to endear themselves to their masters. It was likewise the praise of the master, that when he had a good servant, he knew how to value him. Many masters that are haughty and imperious, think it favour enough to the best servants they have, not to rate them and beat them, and be cruel to them, whereas they ought to be kind to them and tender of them, and solicitous for their welfare and comfort.

That the master when he heard of Jesus, was for making application to him, ver. 3. Masters ought to take particular care of their servants when they are sick; and not to neglect them then. The centurion begged Christ would come and heal his servant; we may now by faithful and fervent prayer apply ourselves to Christ in heaven, and ought to do so when sickness is in our families; for Christ is still the great physician.

3. That he sent some of the elders of the Jews to Christ, to represent the case and solicit for him, thinking that a greater piece of respect to Christ than if he had come himself, because he was an uncircumcised Gentile, whom he thought Christ, being a prophet, would not care for conversing with. For that reason he sent Jews, whom he acknowledged to be favourites of heaven, and not ordinary Jews neither, but elders of the Jews, persons in authority, that the dignity of the messengers might give honour to him to whom they were sent; Balak sent princes to Balaam.

4. That the elders of the Jews were hearty intercessors for the centurion, they besought him instantly, ver. 4. were very urgent with him, pleading for the centurion, that which he would never have pleaded for himself. That he was worthy for whom he should do this. If any Gentile was qualified to receive such a favour, sure he was. The centurion said I am not so much as worthy of a visit, Matt. viii. 8. but the elders of the Jews thought him worthy of the cure; thus honour shall uphold the humble in spirit. Let another man praise thee and not thy own mouth. But that which they insisted upon in particular was, that though he was a Gentile, yet he was a hearty well-wisher to the Jewish nation and religion, ver. 5. they thought there needed as much with Christ as there did with them, to remove the prejudices against him as a Gentile, and a Roman, and an officer of the army, and therefore mention this: (1.) That he was well affected to the people of the Jews; he loveth our nation, which few of the Gentiles did. Probably he had read the Old Testament, from whence it was easy to advance a very high esteem of the Jewish nation, as favoured by heaven above all people. Note, Even conquerors, and those in power, ought to keep up an affection for the conquered, and those they have power over. (2.) That he was well affected to their worship; he built them a new synagogue at Capernaum, finding that what they had was either gone to decay, or not large enough to contain the people; and that the inhabitants were not of ability to build one for themselves. Hereby he testified his veneration for the God of Israel, and his belief of his being the one only living and true God, and his desire, like that of Darius, to have an interest in the prayers of God's Israel, Ezra vi. 10. This centurion built a synagogue at his own proper costs and charges, and probably employed his soldiers that were in garrison there in the building to keep them from idleness. Note, Building places of meeting for religious worship, is a very good work, is an instance of love to God and his people; and those who do good works of that kind, are worthy of double honour.

5. That Jesus Christ was very ready to shew kindness to the centurion, He presently went with them, ver. 6. though he was a Gentile; for is he the Saviour of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, Rom. iii. 29. The centurion did not think himself worthy to visit Christ, ver. 7. Yet Christ thought him worthy to be visited by him; for those that humble themselves shall be exalted.

6. That the centurion, when he heard that Christ was doing him the honour to come to his house, gave further proofs both of his humility and of his faith. Thus the grace of the saints are quickened by Christ's approaches towards them. When he was now not far from the house, and the centurion had notice of it, instead of setting his house in order for his reception, he sends friends to meet him with fresh expressions, (1.) Of his humility; Lord, trouble not thyself, for I am unworthy of such an honour, because I am a Gentile; this speaks not only his low thoughts of himself, notwithstanding the greatness of his figure, but his high thoughts of Christ, notwithstanding the meanness of his figure in the world. He knew how to honour a prophet of God, though he was despised and rejected of men. (2.) Of his faith; Lord, trouble not thyself, for I know it doth not need, thou canst cure my servant without coming under my roof, by that almighty power from which no thoughts can be withholden. Say in a word and my servant shall be healed. So far was this centurion from Nauman's fancy, that he should come to him, and stand and strike his hand over the patient, and so recover him, 2 Kings v. 11. He illustrates this faith of his by a comparison taken from his own profession, and is confident Christ can as easily command away the distemper, as he can command any of his soldiers; can as easily send an angel with commission to cure this servant of his, as he can send a soldier on an errand, ver. 8. Christ hath a sovereign power over all the creatures and all their actions, and can change the course of nature as he pleaseth, can rectify its disorders, and repair its decays in human bodies, for all power is given to him.

7. That our Lord Jesus was wonderfully well pleased with the faith of the centurion, and the more surprised at it, because he was a Gentile; and the centurion's faith having thus honoured Christ, see how he honoured it, ver. 9. he turned him about, as one amazed, and said to the people that followed him, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel. Note, Christ will

will have those that follow him, to observe and take notice of the great examples of faith that are sometimes set before them, especially when any such are found among those that do not follow Christ so closely, as they do in profession: that we may be shamed by the strength of their faith out of the weaknesses and waverings of ours.

8. That the cure was *presently and perfectly* wrought, *ver. 10.* *They that were sent* knew they had their errand, and therefore went back, and found the servant well, and under no remains at all of his distemper. Christ will take cognizance of the distressed case of poor servants, and be ready to relieve them, for there is *no respect of persons with him.* Nor are the Gentiles excluded from the benefit of his grace; nay, this was a specimen of that much greater faith which would be found among the Gentiles, when the gospel would be published, than among the Jews.

11. ¶ And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. 12. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. 13. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. 14. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. 15. And he that was dead sat up and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. 16. And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people. 17. And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about. 18. And the disciples of John shewed him all these things.

We have here the story of Christ's raising to life a widow's son at Nain, that was dead, and in the carrying out to be buried; which Matthew and Mark had made no mention of; only in the general, Matthew had recorded it in Christ's answer to the disciples of John, that *the dead were raised up*, *Matt. xi. 5.*

Observe, 1. Where and when this miracle was wrought. It was the next day after he had cured the centurion's servant, *ver. 11.* Christ was doing good every day, and never had cause to complain that he had *lost a day.* It was done in the gate of a small city or town, called Nain, not far from Capernaum. Probably the same with a city called Nais, which Jerom speaks of.

2. Who were the witnesses of it; it is as well attested as can be, for it was done in the sight of two crowds that met in or near the gate of the city. There was a crowd of *disciples and other people* attending Christ, *ver. 11.* and a crowd of relations and neighbours attending the funeral of the young man, *ver. 12.* Thus there was a sufficient number to attest the truth of this miracle, for it was a greater proof of Christ's divine authority than his healing of diseases, for by no power of nature or any means can the dead be raised.

3. How it was wrought by our Lord Jesus.

1. The person raised to life was a *young man*, cut off by death in the beginning of his days: a common case; *Man comes forth like a flower, and is cut down.* That he was really dead was universally agreed; there could be no collusion in the case, for Christ was *entering into the town*; and had not seen him till now that he met him upon the bier. He was carried out of the city, for the Jews burying places were without their cities, and at some distance from them. This young man was the *only son of his mother*, and *she a widow.* She depended upon him to be the staff of her old age, but he proves a broken reed, every man at his best estate is so. How numerous, how various, how very calamitous are the afflictions of the afflicted in this world? What a vale of tears is it? What a Bochim, what a place of weepers? We may well think how deep the sorrow of this poor mother was for her only son; that is used to express the greatest grief, *Zech. xii. 10.* and the deeper in that she was a widow; broken with breach upon breach, and a full end made of her comforts. *Much people of the city was with her*, by condoling her loss, to comfort her.

2. Christ shewed both his *pity* and his *power* in raising him to life, that he might give a specimen of both, which shine so bright in man's redemption.

1. See how tender his compassions are towards the afflicted, *ver. 13.* When the Lord saw the poor widow following her son to the grave, he had compassion on her. Here was no application made to him for her, not so much as that he would speak some words of comfort to her, but *ex mero motu*, purely from the goodness of his nature he was troubled for her. The case was piteous and he looked upon it with pity. His eyes affected his heart; and he said unto her, *weep not.* Note, Christ has a concern for the mourners, for the miserable, and often prevents them with the blessings of his goodness. He undertook the work of our redemption and salvation, in his love and in his pity. *Isa. lxiii. 9.* What a pleasing idea doth this give us of the compassions of the Lord Jesus, and the multitude of his tender mercies, which may be very comfortable to us when at any time we are in sorrow? Let poor widows comfort themselves in their sorrows with this, that Christ pities them, and knows their souls and adversity; and if others despise their grief, he does not. Christ said, *weep not*; and he could give her a reason for it which no one else could; weep not for a dead son, for he shall presently become a living one. This was a reason peculiar to her case; yet there is a reason common to all that sleep in Jesus, which is of equal force against inordinate and excessive grief for their death, that they shall rise again, shall rise in glory, and therefore we must not sorrow, as those that have no hope, *1 Thess. iv. 13.* Let Rachel that weeps for her children refrain her eyes from tears, for there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to thine own border, *Jer. xxxi. 17.* And let our passion at such a time be checked and calmed by the consideration of Christ's compassion.

See how triumphant his commands are, over even death itself, *ver. 14.* He came and touched the bier or coffin, in or upon which the dead body lay; for to him it would be no pollution; hereby he intimated to the bearers, that they should not proceed; he had something to say to the dead young man: *Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom,* *Job xxxii. 24.* Hereupon they that bare him stood still, and probably let down the bier from their shoulders to the ground, and opened the coffin, if it were closed up;

and then with solemnity, as one that had authority, and to whom belonged the issues of death, he said, *Young man, I say unto thee, arise.* The young man was dead, and could not arise by any power of his own, no more can those that are spiritually dead in trespasses and sins; yet it was no absurdity at all for Christ to bid him arise, when a power went along with that word to put life into him. The gospel call to all people, to young people particularly, is *arise*, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light and life. Christ's dominion over death was evidenced by the immediate effect of his word, *ver. 15.* *He that was dead sat up* without any help. When Christ put life into him he made it appear by his sitting up. Have we grace from Christ; let us shew it. Another evidence of life was, that he began to speak; for whenever Christ gives us spiritual life, he opens the lips in prayer and praise. And lastly, he would not oblige this young man, to whom he had given new life, to go along with him, either as his disciple to minister to him, though he owed him even his ownself; much less as a trophy or shew to get honour by him, but delivered him to his mother, to attend her as became a dutiful son; for Christ's miracles were miracles of mercy; and a great act of mercy this was to this widow; now she was comforted, according to the time in which she had been afflicted, and much more; for she could now look upon this son as a particular favourite of heaven, with more pleasure than if he had not died.

4. What influence it had upon the people, *ver. 16.* *There came a fear on all*, it frightened them to see a dead man start up alive out of his coffin in the open street, at the command of a man; they were all struck with wonder at this miracle, and glorified God. The Lord and his goodness, as well as the Lord and his greatness, are to be feared. The inference they drew from it was, that *a great prophet is risen up among us*, the great prophet that we have long been looking for; doubtless he is the only divine inspired, who can thus breathe life into the dead; and that in him God had visited his people to redeem them, as was expected, *Luke i. 68.* This would be life from the dead indeed to all them that waited for the consolation of Israel. When dead souls are thus raised to spiritual life by a divine power going along with the gospel, we must glorify God; and look upon it as a gracious visit to his people. The report of this miracle was carried, (1.) In general all the country over, *ver. 17.* *This rumour of him*, that he was the great prophet, went forth upon the wings of fame through all Judea, which lay a great way off, and throughout all Galilee, which was the region round about. Most got this notion of him, yet few believed in him, and gave themselves to him. Many have the rumour of Christ's gospel in their ears, and have not the favour and relish of it in their souls. (2.) In particular it was carefully brought to John Baptist, who was now in prison, *ver. 18.* *His disciples came* and gave him an account of all things, that he might know that though he was bound, yet the word of the Lord was not bound; God's work was going on though he was laid aside.

19. ¶ And John calling unto him two of his disciples, sent them unto Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come, or look we for another? 20. When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come, or look we for another? 21. And in the same hour he cured many of their infirmities, and plagues, and of evil spirits, and unto many that were blind he gave sight. 22. Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard, how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. 23. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. 24. ¶ And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind? 25. But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in king's courts. 26. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. 27. This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. 28. For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: But he that is least in the kingdom of God, is greater than he. 29. And all the people that heard him, and the publicans justified God, being baptised with the baptism of John. 30. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptised of him. 31. ¶ And the LORD said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? 32. They are like unto children sitting in the market place, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced: we have mourned unto you, and ye have not wept. 33. For John the Baptist came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. 34. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. 35. But wisdom is justified of all her children.

All this discourse concerning John Baptist, occasioned by his sending to ask whether he was the Messiah or no, we had much as it is here related, *Matt. xi. 2—19.*

First, We have here the message of John Baptist sent to Christ, and the return he made to it. Observe,

1. The great things we are to enquire concerning, is whether he be he that should come to redeem and save sinners, or whether we are to look for another, *ver. 19, 20.* We are sure God has promised that a Saviour shall come, an anointed Saviour; we are sure, that what he has promised he will perform

form in its season: If this Jesus be that promised Messiah, we will receive him, and will look for no other; but if not we will continue our expectations, and though he tarry will wait for him.

2. The faith of John Baptist himself, or at least of his disciples, wanted to be confirmed in this matter; for Christ had not yet publicly declared himself to be indeed the Christ, nay, he would not have his disciples, who knew him to be so, to speak of it, till the proofs of his being so were completed in his resurrection. The great men of the Jewish church had not owned him, nor had he gained any interest that was like to set him upon the throne of his father David. And therefore it is not strange that they should ask, *Art thou the Messiah?* not doubting but that if he were not, he would direct them what other to look for.

3. Christ left it to his own works to praise him in the gates, to tell what he was, and to prove it. While John's messengers were with him he wrought many miraculous cures, in that same hour; which perhaps intimates, that they staid but an hour with him; and what a deal of good work did Christ do in a little time! *ver. 20. He cured many of their infirmities and plagues in body, and of evil spirits that affected the mind either with frenzy or melancholy; and unto many that were blind he gave sight.* He multiplied the cures that there might be no ground left to suspect a fraud. And then, *ver. 22. he bid them go tell John what they had seen.* And he and they might easily argue, as even the common people did, *John vii. 31. When Christ cometh will he do more miracles than these which this man has done?* These cures which they saw him work, were not only confirmations of his commission, but explications of it. The Messiah must come to cure a diseased world, to give light and sight to them that sit in darkness, and to restrain and conquer evil spirits; you see that Jesus doth this to the bodies of people, and therefore must conclude, that is he that should come to do it to the souls of people, and you are to look for no other. To his miracles in the kingdom of nature, he adds this in the kingdom of grace, *ver. 22. to the poor the gospel is preached* which they knew was to be done by the Messiah, for he was anointed to *preach the gospel to the meek, Isa. lxi. 1. and to save the souls of the needy, Psal. lxxiii. 13.* Judge therefore, whether you can look for any other that will more fully answer the characters of the Messiah, and the great intentions of his coming.

4. He gave them an intimation of the danger people were in of being prejudiced against him, notwithstanding these evident proofs of his being the Messiah, *ver. 23. Blessed is he who shall not be offended in me, or scandalized at me.* We are here in a state of trial and probation, and it is agreeable to such a state, that as there are sufficient arguments to confirm the truth to those that are honest and impartial in searching after it, and have their minds prepared to receive it; so there should be also objections to cloud the truth, to those that are careless and worldly and sensual; Christ's education at Nazareth, his residence in Galilee, the meanness of his family and relations, his poverty, and the despicableness of his followers, these and the like were stumbling-blocks to many, which all the miracles he wrought could not help them over: He is *blessed*, for he is wise and humble and well disposed, that is not overcome by these prejudices: It is a sign God *blessed* him, for it is by his grace that he is helped over these stumbling stones, and *he shall be blessed* indeed, blessed in Christ.

Secondly we have here the high *encomium* which Christ gave of John Baptist; not while his messengers were present, lest he should seem to flatter him, but *when they were departed, ver. 34.* to make the people sensible of the advantages they had enjoyed in John's ministry, and were deprived of by his imprisonment. Let them now consider, *What they went out into the wilderness to see;* Who that was about whom there had been so much talk, and such a great and general amazement. Come, faith Christ, I will tell you.

1. He was a man of unshaken *self-consistence*; a man of steadiness and constancy; he was not a reed shaken with the wind, first in one sway and then in another, shifting with every wind, he was firm as a rock, not *fickle* as a reed; if he could have bowed like a reed to Herod, and have complied with the court, he might have been a favourite there; but *one of those things moved him.*

2. He was a man of unparalleled *self-denial*; a great example of mortification and contempt of the world; he was not a man clothed in soft raiment, nor did he live delicately, *ver. 25.* but, on the contrary, he lived in a wilderness, and was clad and fed accordingly; instead of adorning and pampering the body, he brought it under and kept it in subjection.

3. He was a prophet, had his commission and instructions immediately from God, and not of man or by man. He was by birth a priest, but that is never taken notice of; for his glory, as a prophet, eclipsed the honour of his priesthood; nay, he was more, he was *much more than a prophet, ver. 26.* than any of the prophets of the Old Testament, for they spake of Christ as at a distance, he spake of him as at the door.

4. He was the harbinger and forerunner of the Messiah, and he was himself prophesied of in the Old Testament, *ver. 27. This is he of whom it is written, Mal. iii. 1. Behold I send my messenger before thy face.* Before he sent the Master himself, he sent a messenger to give notice of his coming, and prepare people to receive him; had the Messiah been to appear as a temporal prince, under which character the carnal Jews expected him, his messenger would have appeared either in the pomp of a general, or the gaiety of a herald at arms; but it was a previous indication, plain enough, of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, that the messenger he sent before him to prepare his way did it by preaching repentance, and reformation of mens hearts and lives; certainly that kingdom was not of this world, which was thus ushered in.

5. He was upon this account so great, that really there was not a greater prophet than he. Prophets were really the greatest that were born of women, more honourable than kings and princes, and John was the greatest of all the prophets; the country was not sensible what a valuable, what an invaluable man it had in it, when John Baptist went about preaching and baptizing. And yet *he that is least in the kingdom of God, is greater than he.* The least gospel minister that has obtained mercy of the Lord, to be *skillful* and *faithful* in his work; or the meanest of the apostles, and first preachers of the gospel, being employed under a more excellent dispensation, are in a more honourable office than John Baptist. The meanest of those that follow the Lamb, far excels the greatest of those that went before him. Those therefore who live under the gospel dispensation, have so much the more to answer for.

Thirdly, We have here the just censure of the men of that generation, that were not wrought upon by the ministry either of John Baptist, or of Jesus Christ himself.

1. Christ here shews what contempt was put upon John Baptist, while he was preaching and baptizing. (1.) Those that did shew him any respect, were but the common ordinary sort of people; that in the eye of the gay part of mankind, were rather a disgrace to him than any credit, *ver. 29. The people indeed, the vulgar herd, of whom it was said, The people who knoweth not the law are cursed, John vii. 49.* And the publicans, men of ill fame, as being generally men of ill morals, or taken to be so, these were baptized with his baptism, and became his disciples; and these, though glorious monuments of divine grace, yet did not magnify John in the eye of

the world; but by their repentance and reformation they justified God, justified his conduct, and the wisdom of it in appointing such a one as John Baptist to be the forerunner of the Messiah; they hereby made it to appear, that it was the best method that could be taken, for it was not in vain to them; whatever it was to others. (2.) The great men of their church and nation, the *poets* and the *politicians*, that would have done him some credit in the eye of the world, did him all the dishonour they could; they heard him indeed, but they were not baptized of him, *ver. 30.* The Pharisees that were most in reputation for religion and devotion, and the lawyers that were celebrated for their learning, especially their knowledge of the scriptures, they rejected the counsel of God against themselves, they frustrated it, that received the grace of God in the baptism of John in vain. God, in sending that messenger among them, had a kind purpose of good to them, designed their salvation by it, and if they had closed with the counsel of God, it had been for themselves, they had been made for ever; but they rejected it, would not comply with it, and it was against themselves, it was to their own ruin; they came short of the benefit intended them, and not only so but forfeited the grace of God, put a bar in their own door, and by refusing that discipline which was to fit them for the kingdom of the Messiah, shut themselves out of it, and they not only excluded themselves, but hindered others, and stood in their way.

2. He here shews the strange *perverseness* of the men of that generation, in their cavils both against John and Christ, and the prejudices they conceived against them.

1. They made but a jesting matter of the methods God took to do them good, *ver. 31. Whereunto shall I liken the men of this generation?* What can I think of, absurd enough to represent them by? They are then, *like children sitting in the market-place*, that mind nothing that is serious, but are as full of play as they can hold; as if God were but in a jest with them, in all the methods he takes to do them good, as children are with one another in the market-place, *ver. 32.* they turn it all off with a banter, and are no more affected with it than with a piece of pageantry. This is the ruin of multitudes, they can never persuade themselves to be serious in the concerns of their souls; old men sitting in the Sanhedrin, were but as *children sitting in the market-place*, and no more affected with the things that belonged to their everlasting peace, than people are with children's play. O the amazing stupidity and vanity of the blind and ungodly world! The Lord awaken them out of their security.

2. They still found something or other to carp at.

1. John Baptist was a reserved austere man, lived much in solitude, and ought to have been admired for being such a humble, sober, self-denying man, and hearkened to as a man of thought and contemplation: but this which was his praise, was turned to his reproach; because he came *neither eating nor drinking*, so freely and plentifully and cheerfully as others did, *ye say, he has a devil;* he is a melancholy man, he is possessed as the demoniac whose dwelling was among the tombs, though he be not quite so wild.

2. Our Lord Jesus was of a more free and open conversation, he came eating and drinking, *ver. 34.* he would go and dine with Pharisees, though he knew they did not care for him; and with publicans, though he knew they were no credit to him; yet in hopes of doing good, both to the one and the other, he conversed familiarly with them. By this it appears, that the ministers of Christ may be of very different tempers and dispositions, very different ways of preaching and living, and yet all good and useful; *diversity of gifts*, but each given to *profit withal*; therefore none must make themselves a standard to all others, nor judge hardly of those that do not just as they do. John Baptist bore witness to Christ, and Christ applauded John Baptist, though they were the reverse of each other in their way of living. But the common enemies of them both reproached them both. The very same men that had represented John as *crazed in his intellectuals*, because he came *neither eating nor drinking*, represented our Lord Jesus as *corrupt in his morals*, because he came eating and drinking; he is a *gluttonous man*, and a *wine-bibber*. Ill-will never speaks well. See the malice of wicked people, and how they put the worst construction upon every thing they meet with in the gospel, and in the preachers and professors of it; and hereby they think to diminish them, but really destroy themselves.

Lastly, He shews, that notwithstanding this God will be glorified in the salvation of a chosen remnant, *ver. 35. Wisdom is justified of all her children.* There are those who are given to wisdom, as *her children*, and they shall be brought, by the grace of God, to submit to wisdom's conduct and government, and thereby to justify wisdom in the ways she takes in bringing them to that submission, for to them they are effectual, and thereby appear well chosen. Wisdom's children are herein *unanimous*, one and all, they have all a complacency in the methods of grace which divine wisdom takes; and think never the worse of them for their being ridiculed by some.

36. ¶ And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. 37. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster-box of ointment, 38. And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. 39. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him, saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him? for she is a sinner. 40. And Jesus answering, said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. 41. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. 42. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most? 43. Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave the most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. 44. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. 45. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman,

woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. 46. Mine head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. 47. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven the same loveth little. 48. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. 49. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? 50. And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

When and where this passage of story happened doth not appear; this evangelist doth not observe order of time in his narratives, so much as the other evangelists do; but it comes in here, upon occasion of Christ's being reproached as a friend to publicans and sinners, to shew that it was only for their good, and to bring them to repentance, that he conversed with them; and that those he admitted near him were reformed, or in a hopeful way to be so. Who this woman was, that here testified so great an affection to Christ doth not appear; it is commonly said to be Mary Magdalen, but I find no ground in scripture for it: she is described chap. viii. 2. and Mark xvi. 9. to be one, out of whom Christ had cast seven devils; but that is not mentioned here; and therefore it is probable it was not she.

Now observe here,

1. The civil entertainment which a Pharisee gave to Christ, and his gracious acceptance of that entertainment, ver. 36. *one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him*: either because he thought it would be a reputation to him to have such a guest at his table, or because his company would be an entertainment to him and his family and friends. It appears that this Pharisee did not believe in Christ, for he will not own him to be a prophet, ver. 36. and yet our Lord Jesus accepted his invitation, *went into his house and sat down to meat*; that they might see he took the same liberty with Pharisees, that he did with publicans, in hopes of doing them good. And those may venture further into the society of such as are prejudiced against Christ, and his religion, who have wisdom and grace sufficient to instruct and argue with them, than others may.

2. The great respects which a poor penitent sinner shewed him, when he was at meat in the Pharisee's house. It was a woman in the city that was a sinner, a Gentile, I doubt, a harlot, known to be so, and infamous; she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, and having been converted from her wicked course of life by his preaching, she came to acknowledge her obligations to him, having no opportunity of doing it any other way, than by washing his feet, and anointing them with some sweet ointment that she brought with her for that purpose. The way of sitting at table then was such, as that their feet were partly behind them. Now this woman did not look Christ in the face, but came behind him, and did the part of a maid-servant whose office it was to wash the feet of the guests. 1 Sam. xxv. 41. and to prepare the ointments, 1 Sam. viii. 13.

Now in what this good woman did, we may observe,

(1.) Her deep humiliation for sin; she stood behind him weeping, her eyes had been the inlets and outlets of sin, and now she makes them fountains of tears. Her face is now blubbered, that perhaps used to be painted. Her hair now made a towel of, which before had been plaited and adorned. We have reason to think she had before sorrowed for sin, but now she had an opportunity of coming into the presence of Christ, the wound bled afresh and her sorrow renewed. Note, it well becomes penitents, upon all their approaches to Christ, to renew their godly sorrow and shame for sin, when he was pacified. Ezek. xvi. 63.

(2.) Her strong affection to the Lord Jesus; this was it that our Lord Jesus took special notice of, that she loved much, ver. 42-47. She washed his feet, in token of her ready submission to the meanest office in which she might do him honour. Nay, she washed them with her tears, tears of joy, she was in a transport to find herself so near her Saviour, whom her soul loved. She kissed his feet, as one unworthy the kisses of his mouth, which the spouse coveted, Cant. i. 2. It was a kiss of adoration as well as affection; she wiped them with her hair, as one entirely devoted to his honour; her eyes shall yield water to wash them, and her hair be a towel to wipe them; and she anointed his feet with the ointment, owning him hereby to be the Messiah, the anointed; she anointed his feet, in token of her consent to God's design in anointing his head with the oil of gladness. Note, all true penitents have a dear love to the Lord Jesus.

3. The offence which the Pharisee took at Christ, for admitting the respects which this poor penitent paid him, ver. 39. He spake within himself, little thinking that Christ knew what he thought, *This man if he were a prophet*, would then have so much knowledge as to perceive that this woman is a sinner, is a Gentile, is a woman of ill fame; and so much sanctity as therefore not to suffer her to come near him, for can one of such a character approach a prophet and his heart not rise at it? See how apt proud and narrow souls are to think that others should be as haughty and censorious as themselves. Simon, if she had touched him, would have said *Stand by thyself, come not near me, I am holier than thou*, Isa. lxv. 5. and he thought Christ should do the same.

4. Christ's justification of the woman in what she did to him, and of himself in admitting it. Christ knew what the Pharisee spake within himself, and made answer to it. Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee, ver. 41. Though he was kindly entertained at his table, yet even there he reproved him for what he saw amiss in him, and would not suffer sin upon him. Those whom Christ hath something against, he hath something to say to, for his Spirit shall reprove. Simon is willing to give him the hearing, he saith, *Master, say on*. Though he could not believe him to be a prophet, because he was not so nice and precise as he was, yet he can compliment him with the title of Master, among those that cry *Lord, Lord*, but do not the things which he saith. Now Christ in his answer to the Pharisee, reasons thus: it is true this woman hath been a sinner, he knows it; but she is a pardoned sinner which supposed her to be a penitent sinner; that what she did to him was an expression of her great love to her Saviour, by whom her sins were forgiven; that if she was pardoned, who had been so great a sinner, it might reasonably be expected that she should love her Saviour more than others, and should give greater proofs of it than others; and if this was the fruit of her love, and flowing from a sense of the pardon of her sins, it became him to accept of it, and it ill became the Pharisee to be offended at it. Now Christ has a further reach in this; the Pharisee doubted whether he was a prophet or no, nay he did in effect deny it, but Christ shews that he was more than a prophet, for he is one that has power on earth to forgive sins, and to whom are owing the affections and thankful acknowledgements of penitent pardoned sinners.

Now in his answer,

1. He doth by a parable force Simon to acknowledge, that the greater sinner this woman had been, the greater love she ought to shew to Jesus Christ when her sins were pardoned, ver. 41, 42, 43. A man had two debtors that were both insolvent, but one of them owed him ten times more than the other; he very freely forgave them both, and did not take the advantage of the law against them, did not order them and their children to be sold, or deliver them to the tormentors: now they were both sensible of the great kindness they had received, but which of them will love him most? Certainly, saith the Pharisee, he to whom he forgave most: and herein he rightly judged. Now we being obliged to forgive, as we are, and hope to be forgiven; we may from hence learn the duty between debtor and creditor. (1.) The debtor if he have any thing to pay, ought to make satisfaction to his creditor. No man can reckon that his own, or have any comfortable enjoyment of it, but that which is so when all his debts are paid. (2.) If God in his providence hath disabled the debtor to pay his debt, the creditor ought not to be severe with him, nor to go to the utmost rigour of the law with him, but freely to forgive him. *Summum jus est summa injuria*. Let the unmerciful creditor read that parable, Matt. xviii. 23. &c. and tremble for they shall have judgment without mercy that show no mercy. (3.) The debtor that has found his creditors merciful, ought to be very grateful to them; and if he cannot otherwise recompense them, ought to love them. Some insolvent debtors instead of being grateful are spiteful to their creditors that lose by them, and cannot give them a good word, only because they complain, whereas losers may have leave to speak; But this parable speaks of God as the creditor (or rather of the Lord Jesus himself, for he it is that forgives and is beloved by the debtor) and sinners are the debtors: And so we may learn here.

1. That sin is a debt, and sinners the debtors to God Almighty. As creatures we owe a debt, a debt of obedience to the precept of the law, and for non-payment of that, as sinners we become liable to the penalty. We have not paid our rent, nay we have wasted our Lord's goods, and so we become debtors. God has an action against us for the injury we have done him, and the omission of our duty to him.

2. That some are deeper in debt to God by reason of sin than others are; one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. The Pharisee was the less debtor, yet he is a debtor too, which was more than he thought himself, but rather that God was his debtor, Luke, xviii. 10, 11. This woman, that had been a scandalous notorious sinner was the greater debtor. Some sinners are, in themselves greater debtors than others, and some sinners by reason of divers aggravating circumstances greater debtors. As those that have sinned most openly and scandalously, that have sinned against greater light and knowledge, more convictions and warnings, and more mercies and means.

3. That whether our debt be more or less, it is more than we are able to pay. They had nothing to pay, nothing at all to make a composition with, for the debt is great, and we have nothing at all to pay it with; silver and gold will not pay our debt, nor wit sacrifice and offering, no not thousands of rams. No righteousness of our own will pay it, no not our repentance and obedience for the future; for it is what we are already bound to, and it is God that works it within us.

4. That the God of heaven is ready to forgive, frankly to forgive poor sinners upon gospel terms, though their debt be never so great. If we repent and believe in Christ, our iniquity shall not be our ruin, it shall not be laid to our charge. God has proclaimed his name gracious and merciful, and ready to forgive sin; and his Son having purchased pardon for penitent believers, his gospel promisseth it to them, and his Spirit seals it, and gives them the comfort of it.

5. That those who have their sins pardoned, are obliged to love him that pardoned them; and the more is forgiven them, the more they should love him. The greater sinners any have been before their conversion, the greater saints they should be after; the more they should study to do for God, and the more their hearts should be enlarged in obedience. When a persecuting Saul became a preaching Paul, he laboured more abundantly.

2. He applies this parable to the different temper and carriage of the Pharisee and the sinner towards Christ. Though the Pharisee would not allow Christ to be a prophet, Christ seems ready to allow him to be in a justified state, and that he was one forgiven, though to him less was forgiven. He did indeed shew some love to Christ in inviting him to his house, but nothing to what this poor woman shewed. Look thee, saith Christ to him, she is one that hath much forgiven her, and therefore, according to thine own judgment, it might be expected she should love much more than thou dost, and so it appears, ver. 44. *Saith thou this woman?* Thou looked upon her with contempt, but consider what a kinder friend she is to me than thou art; should I then accept thy kindness and refuse hers?

1. Thou didst not so much as order a basin of water to be brought to wash my feet in, when I came in wearied and dirtied with my walk, which would have been some refreshment to me; but she has done much more, she hath washed my feet with tears, tears of affection to me, tears of affliction for sin, and has wiped them with the hairs of her head, in token of her great love to me.

2. Thou didst not so much as kiss my cheek, which was an usual expression of a hearty and affectionate welcome to a friend, but this woman hath not ceased to kiss my feet, ver. 45. thereby expressing both a humble and an affectionate love.

3. Thou didst not provide me a little common oil as usual to anoint my head with, but she has bestowed a box of precious ointment upon my feet, ver. 46. So far hath she outdone thee. The reason why some people blame the pains and expence of zealous Christians in religion is, because they are not willing themselves to come up to it, but resolve to rest in a cheap and easy religion.

3. He silenced the Pharisee's cavil, ver. 47. I say unto thee, Simon, her sins which are many are forgiven. He owns she had been guilty of many sins, but they are forgiven her, and therefore it is no way unbecoming me to accept her kindness. They are forgiven, for she loved much. It should be rendered, therefore she loved much; for it is plain, by the tenor of Christ's discourse, that her loving much was not the cause but the effect of her pardon, and of her comfortable sense of it; for we love God because he first loved us; he did not forgive us because we first loved him. But to whom little is forgiven, as is to thee, the same loveth little, as thou dost. Hereby he intimates to the Pharisee that his love to Christ was so little, that he had reason to question whether he loved him at all in sincerity; and consequently whether indeed his sins, though comparatively little, were forgiven him. Instead of grudging greater sinners the mercy they find with Christ upon their repentance, we should be stirred up by their example to examine ourselves, whether we be indeed forgiven, and do love Christ.

4. He silenced her fears, who probably was discouraged by the Pharisee's offence, and yet would not so far yield to the discouragement as to fly off. (1.) Christ said unto her, *Thy sins are forgiven*, ver. 48. Note. The more we express our sorrow for sin, and our love to Christ, the clearer evidence we have of the forgiveness of our sins; for it is by the experience of a work of grace wrought in us, that we obtain the assurance of an act of grace wrought.

wrought for us. How well was she paid for her pains and cost when she was dismissed with this word from Christ. *Thy sins are forgiven*, and what an effectual prevention would this be of her return to sin again.

(2.) Though there were those present who quailed with Christ in their own minds for presuming to forgive sin, pronounced sinners absolved, *ver. 49*, as those had done, *Matt. ix. 3*. yet he stood to what he had said; for as he had there proved that he had power to forgive sin, by curing the man sick of the palsy, and therefore would not here take notice of the cavil, so he would now shew that he had pleasure in forgiving sin, and it was his delight; he loves to speak pardon and peace to penitents, *ver. 50*. He said to the woman, *Thy faith hath saved thee*. This would confirm and double her comfort in the forgiveness of her sin, that she was justified by her faith. All these expressions of sorrow for sin, and love to Christ, were the effects and products of faith; and therefore as faith of all graces doth most honour God, so Christ doth of all graces put most honour upon faith. Note, They who know their faith hath saved them, may go in peace, may go on their ways rejoicing.

CHAP. VIII.

Most of this chapter is a repetition of divers passages of Christ's preaching and miracles, which we had before in Matthew and Mark, and they are out of such weight, that they are worth repeating, and therefore they are repeated, that out of the mouth not only of two, but of three witnesses every word may be established. Here is, (1.) A general account of Christ's preaching, and how he had subsistence for himself and his numerous family, by the charitable contributions of good people, *ver. 1—3*. (2.) The parable of the sower, and the four sorts of ground, with the exposition of it, and some inference from it, *ver. 4—13*. (3.) The preference which Christ gave to his obedient disciples, before his nearest relations according to the flesh, *ver. 19—21*. (4.) His stilling a storm at sea with a word's speaking, *ver. 22—25*. (5.) His casting a legion of devils out of a man that was possessed by them, *ver. 26—40*. (6.) His healing the woman that had the bloody issue, and raising Jairus's daughter to life, *ver. 41—56*.

1. **AND** it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village preaching, and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him; 2. And certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils. 3. And Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto them of their substance.

We are here told,

1. What Christ made the constant business of his life, and that was preaching; in that work he was indefatigable, and went about doing good, *ver. 1*. afterward, *ἐν τῷ ἀσκήσει*, ordine, in the proper time or method. Christ took his work before him, and went about it regularly; he observed a series, or order of business, so as that the end of one good work was the beginning of another. Now observe here, (1.) Where he preached; he went about *διὰ παντός*, peragrabat. He was an itinerant preacher, did not confine himself to one place, but diffused the beams of his light. Circumibat, he went his circuit as a judge, having found his preaching perhaps more acceptable where it was new. He went about through every city, that none might plead ignorance. Hereby he set an example to his disciples; they must traverse the nations of the earth, as he did the cities of Israel. Nor did he confine himself to the cities, but went into the villages among the plain country people, to preach to the inhabitants of the villages, *Judg. v. 31*.

(2.) What he preached. He shewed the glad tidings of the kingdom of God, that it was now to be set up among them. Tidings of the kingdom of God are glad tidings, and those Jesus Christ came to bring; to tell the children of men that God was willing to take all those under his protection, that were willing to return to their allegiance; it was glad tidings to the world, that there was hope of its being reformed and reconciled.

(3.) Who were his attendants. The twelve were with him, not to preach if he were present, but to learn from him what and how to preach hereafter; and, if occasion were, to be sent to places where he could not go. Happy were those his servants that heard his wisdom.

2. Whence he had the necessary supports of life, he lived upon the kindness of his friends. There were certain women who frequently attended his ministry, that ministered to him of their substance, *ver. 2, 3*. Some of them are named, but there were many others, who were zealously affected to the doctrine of Christ, and thought themselves bound in justice to encourage it, having themselves found benefit, and in charity, hoping that many others might find benefit by it too.

1. They were such for the most part as had been Christ's patients, and were the monuments of his power and mercy; they had been healed by him of evil spirits and infirmities. Some of them had been troubled in mind and melancholy, others of them afflicted in body, and he had been to them a powerful healer: hence the physician both of body and soul, and those who have been healed by him, ought to study what they shall render to him. We are bound in interest to attend him, that we may be ready to apply ourselves to him for help in case of a relapse; and we are bound in gratitude to serve him and his gospel, who hath saved us, and saved us by it.

2. One of them was Mary Magdalen, out of whom had been cast seven devils; a certain number for an uncertain. Some think she was one that had been very wicked, and then we may suppose her to be the woman that was a sinner, mentioned just before, *chap. vii*. And Dr. Lightfoot finding, in some of the Talmudists writings, that Mary Magdalen signified Mary the plaiter of hair, thinks it applicable to her, she having been noted in the days of her iniquity and infamy, for that plaiting of hair, which is opposed to modest apparel, *1 Tim. ii. 9*. But though she had been an immodest woman, upon her repentance and reformation she found mercy, and became a zealous disciple of Christ. Note, The greatest of sinners must not despair of pardon; and the worse any have been before their conversion, the more they should study to do for Christ after: Or rather, she was one that had been very melancholy, and then probably it was Mary the sister of Lazarus, who was a woman of a sorrowful spirit: might be originally of Magdala, but removed to Bethany. This Mary Magdalen was attending on Christ's cross and sepulchre, add if she were not Mary the sister of Lazarus, either that particular friend and favourite of Christ's did not attend then, or the evangelists did not take notice of her, neither of which we can suppose; thus Dr. Lightfoot argues; yet there is this to be objected against it, that Mary Magdalen is reckoned among the women that followed Jesus from Galilee;

Matt. xxvii. 55, 56. whereas Mary the sister of Lazarus had her residence in Bethany.

3. Another of them was Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward; she had been his wife (so some) but was now a widow, and left in good circumstances; if she was now his wife, we have reason to think that her husband, though preferred in Herod's court, had received the gospel, and was very willing that his wife should be both a hearer of Christ, and a contributor to him.

4. There were many of them that ministered to Christ of their substance. It was an instance of the meanness of that condition to which our Saviour humbled himself that he needed it, and his great humility and condescension that he accepted it. Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, and lived upon alms. Let none say they scorn to be beholden to the charity of their neighbors, when Providence has brought them into straits; but let them ask it, and be thankful for it as a favour. Christ would rather be beholden to his known friends for a maintenance for himself and his disciples; than be burthensome to strangers in the cities and villages whither he came to preach. Note, It is the duty of those who are taught in the word, to communicate to them who teach them in all good things; and those who are herein liberal and cheerful, honour the Lord with their substance and bring a blessing upon it.

4. ¶ And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable: 5. A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. 6. And some fell upon a rock and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. 7. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it, and choaked it. 8. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundred-fold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. 9. And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? 10. And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. 11. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12. Those by the way side are they that hear: then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. 13. They on the rock, are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. 14. And that which fell among thorns, are they, which when they have heard, go forth, and are choaked with cares and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. 15. But that on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. 16. ¶ No man when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed: but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light. 17. For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest: neither any thing hid, that shall not be known, and come abroad. 18. Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given: and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have. 19. ¶ Then came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press. 20. And it was told him by certain, which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. 21. And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

The former paragraph began with an account of Christ's industry in preaching, *ver. 1*. this began with an account of the people's industry in hearing, *ver. 4*. He went into every city to preach; so they, one would think, would have contented themselves to hear him when he came to their own city, we know that those would: but there were those here that came to him out of every city, would not stay till he came to them, nor think they had had enough when he left them, but met him when he was coming towards them, and followed him, when he was going from them. Nor did he excuse himself with this from going to the cities, that there were some from the cities that came to him; for though there were, yet the most had not zeal enough to bring them to him, and therefore such is his wonderful condescension, that he will go to them; for he is found of those that sought him not, *Isa. lxx. 1*.

Here was, it seems, a vast concourse, much people were gathered together, abundance of fish to cast the net among; and he was ready and willing to teach as they were to be taught. Now in these verses we have,

First, Necessary and excellent rules and cautions for hearing the word in the parable of the sower, and the reddition and application of it, all which we had twice before more largely. When Christ had put forth this parable (1.) The disciples were inquisitive concerning the meaning of it, *ver. 9*. They asked him what might this parable be? Note, We should covet earnestly to know the true intent, and full extent of the word we hear, that we may neither be mistaken in our own knowledge, nor defective in it. (2.) Christ made them sensible of what great advantage it was to them, that they had opportunity of acquainting themselves with the mystery and meaning of this word, which others had not, *ver. 10*. Unto you it is given. Note, Those who would receive instruction from Christ, must know and consider what a privilege it is to be instructed by him, what a distinguishing privilege to be led into the light, such a light, when others are left in darkness, such a darkness. Happy are we; and for ever indebted to free

free grace, if the same thing that is a *parable* to others, with which they are only *amused*, is a *plain truth* to us by which we are *enlightened* and *governed*, and into the mould of which we are *delivered*.

Now from the parable itself, and the explication of it. Observe,

1. The *heart of man* is a *soil* to the *seed of God's word*; it is capable of receiving it, and bringing forth the fruits of it; but unless that seed be sown in it, it will bring forth nothing valuable, our care therefore must be to bring the *seed* and the *soil* together. To what purpose have we the *seed* in the scripture, if it be not *sown*? and to what purpose have we the *soil* in our hearts, if it be not sown with that seed?

2. The *success* of the *seedness* is very much according to the nature and temper of the *soil*, and as that is, or is not disposed to receive the seed. The word of God is to us as we are, a *favour of life unto life, or of death unto death*.

3. The devil is a subtil and spiteful enemy, that makes it his business to hinder our profiting by the word of God. He takes the word out of the hearts of *careless hearers*, *ver. 12. lest they should believe and be saved*, that is added here to teach us, 1. That we cannot be *saved* unless we *believe*: The word of the gospel will not be a *saving word* to us, unless it be mixed with faith. 2. That therefore the devil doth all he can to keep us from *believing*, to make us not heed the word when we read and hear it; or if we heed it for the present to make us forget it again, and let it slip, (*Heb. ii. 1.*) or if we remember it, to create prejudices in our minds against it, or *direct* our minds from it to something else; and all is, *lest we should believe and be saved*, lest we should believe and *rejoice*, while he believes and *trembles*.

4. Where the word of God is heard *carelessly*, there is commonly a *contempt* put upon it too. It is added here in the parable, that the seed which fell by the way-side was *trodde[n] down*, *ver. 5.* They that wilfully shut their ears against the word, do in effect trample it under their feet; they *despise the commandment of the Lord*.

5. Those on whom the word makes *some impressions*, but they are not *deep and durable* ones, will shew their hypocrisy in a time of trial; as the seed sown upon a rock where it gains no root, *ver. 13.* these for a *while believe*, a little while; their profession promiseth something, but in *time of temptation fall away* from their good beginnings: whether the temptation arise from the smiles, or from the frowns of the world, they are easily overcome by it.

6. That the *pleasures of this life* are as dangerous and mischievous thorns to choke the good seed of the word, as any other. That is added here, *ver. 14.* which was not in the other evangelists. Those that are *not intangled in the cares of this life*, nor inveigled with the deceitfulness of riches, but boast that they are dead to them, yet may be kept from heaven by an affected indolence, and the love of ease and pleasure. The delights of sense may ruin the soul, even lawful delights indulged, and too much delighted in.

7. That it is not enough that the fruit be brought forth, but it must be brought to *perfection*, it must be fully ripened, if it be not, it is as if there was no fruit at all brought forth; for that which in Matthew and Mark is said to be *unfruitful*, is the same that here is said to *bring forth none to perfection*: For, *factum non dicitur, quod non perseverat*.

8. The good ground which brings forth good fruit, is an *honest and good heart*, well disposed to receive instruction and commandment, *ver. 19.* a heart free from sinful pollutions, and firmly fixed for God and duty, an upright heart, a tender heart, and a heart that trembles at the word, is an honest and good heart; that having heard the word *understands* it, so it is in Matthew; *receives* it, so it is in Mark; and *keeps* it, so it is here, as the soil not only receives but keeps the seed; and the stomach not only receives, but keeps the food or physick.

9. Where the word is well kept, there is fruit brought forth *with patience*, that also is added here; there must be both bearing patience, and waiting patience; patience to suffer the tribulation and persecution which may arise because of the word. Patience to continue to the end in well-doing.

10. In consideration of all this, we ought to take heed how we hear, *ver. 18.* take heed of those things that will hinder our profiting by the word we hear, watch over our hearts in hearing, and take heed lest they betray us. Take heed lest we hear carelessly and slightly, lest we entertain prejudices against the word we hear upon any account; and take heed to the frame of our spirits after we have heard the word, lest we lose what we have gained.

2. Needful instruction given to those that are appointed to preach the word, and to those also that have heard it.

(1.) Those that have received the gift must minister the same. Ministers that have the dispensing of the gospel committed to them, people that have profited by the word, and are thereby qualified to profit others, must look upon themselves as lighted candles; ministers must in solemn authoritative preaching, and people in brotherly, familiar discourse, diffuse their light, for a candle must not be covered with a vessel, or put under a bed, *ver. 16.* Ministers and Christians are to be lights in the world, *holding forth the word of life*, their light must shine before men; they must not only be good, but do good.

(2.) We must expect that what is now done *in secret*, and from unseen springs, will shortly be manifested and made known, *ver. 17.* What is committed to you in secret, should be made manifest by you; for your master did not give you talents to be buried, but to be traded with: Let that which is now hid be made known, for if it be not manifested by you, it will be manifested against you, will be produced in evidence of your treachery.

(3.) The gifts we have will either be continued to us, or taken from us, according as we do or do not make use of them for the glory of God, and the edification of our brethren, *ver. 18.* *Whosoever hath to him shall be given*, he that hath gifts and doth good with them shall have more; he that *buried his talent*, shall lose it. From him that has not, shall be taken away even that which he hath, so it is in Mark, that which he seemed to have, so it is in Luke. Note, The grace that is lost was but seeming grace, was never true. Men do but seem to have what they do not use, and shews of religion will be lost and forfeited; they *went out from us, because they were not of us*; 1 John ii. 19. Let us see to it that we have grace in sincerity, the root of the matter found in us, and that is a good part which shall never be taken away from those that have it.

3. Great encouragement given to those that prove themselves faithful hearers of the word, by being *doers of the work*, in a particular instance of Christ's respect to his disciples, in preferring them even before his nearest relations, *ver. 19, 20, 21.* which passage or story we had twice before. Observe, (1.) What crowding there was after Christ, there was no coming near for the throng of people that attended him; who though they were crowded never so much, would not be crowded out from his congregation.

(2.) That some of his nearest kindred were zealous solicitous to hear him preach. Instead of getting within, as they might easily have done, if they had come in time, desiring to hear him, they stood without desiring to see him: and probably out of a foolish fear, lest he should spend himself with

too much speaking, designing nothing but to interrupt him, and oblige him to break off. (3.) That Jesus Christ would rather be busy at his work than conversing with his friends. He would not leave his preaching to speak with his mother and his brethren, for it was his *meat and drink* to be so employed. (4.) That Christ is pleased to own those that are his nearest and dearest relations, that *hear the word of God, and do it*; they are to him more than his mother and brethren.

22. ¶ Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. 23. But as they sailed, he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake, and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. 24. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind, and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. 25. And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid, wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this? for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him. 26. ¶ And they arrived at Galilee. 27. And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. 28. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee torment me not. 29. (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For often times it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains, and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.) 30. And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. 31. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep. 32. And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. 33. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choaked. 34. When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country. 35. Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus and found the man out of whom the devils had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. 36. They also which saw it, told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed. 37. ¶ Then the whole multitude of the country of Gadarenes round about, besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again. 38. Now that man out of whom the devils were departed, besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away saying, 39. ¶ Return to thine own house and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way and published throughout the whole city, how great things Jesus had done unto him.

We have here two illustrious proofs of the power of our Lord Jesus, which we had before: His power over the wind, and his power over the devils.

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6. When our dangers are over, it becomes us to take to ourselves the shame of our own fears, and to give to Christ the glory of his power. When Christ had turned the storm into a calm, then were they glad because they were quiet, *Psal. cvii. 30.* And then, (1.) Christ gives them a rebuke for their inordinate fear, *ver. 25.* *Where is your faith?* Note, Many that have true faith, have it to seek when they have occasion to use it; they tremble, and are discouraged, if second causes frown upon them, a little thing disheartens them, and where is their faith then? (2.) They give him the glory of his power; they being afraid, wondered. Those that had feared the storm, now the danger was over, with good reason feared him that had stilled it; and said one to another, what manner of man is this? They might as well have said, *Who is a God like unto thee?* For it is God's prerogative, to still the noise of the sea, the noise of the waves, *Psal. lxxv. 7.*

Secondly, His power over the devil, the prince of the power of the air: In the next passage of story he comes into a closer grapple with him than he did when he commanded the winds. Presently after the winds were stilled, they were brought to their desired haven, and arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, and there went ashore, *ver. 26, 27.* and he soon met with that which was his business over, and thought it worth his while to go through a storm to it.

We may learn a great deal out of this story concerning this world of infernal malignant spirits, which though not working now ordinarily, in the same way as here, yet we are all concerned at all times to stand upon our guard against.

1. These malignant spirits are very numerous. They that had taken possession of this one man called themselves *legion*, *ver. 30.* because many devils were entered into him: He had had devils a long time, *ver. 27.* But perhaps those that had been long in possession of him, upon some foresight of our Saviour's coming to make an attack upon them, and finding they could not prevent it by the storm they had raised, sent for recruits, intending this to be a decisive battle, and hoping now to be too hard for him that had cast out so many unclean spirits, and to give him a defeat; and either were, or at least would be thought to be a legion of them, formidable as an army with banners; and now at least, to be what the twentieth legion of the Roman army, which was long quartered at Chester, was stiled, *legio vindex, a victorious legion.*

2. They have an inveterate enmity to man, and all his conveniences and comforts. This man in whom the devils had got possession, and kept it long, being under their influence, wore no clothes, neither abode in any house, *ver. 27.* though cloathing, and a habitation, are two of the necessary supports of this life. Nay, and because man had a natural dread of the habitations of the dead, they forced this man to abide in the tombs, to make him so much the more a terror to himself, and to all about him, so that his soul had as much cause as ever any man's had to be weary of his life, and to choose strangling and death rather.

3. They are very strong and fierce and unruly, and hated and scorned to be restrained, *ver. 29.* He was kept bound in chains and in fetters, that he might not be mischievous either to others or to himself, but he brake the bands. Note, Those that are ungovernable by any other, thereby shew that they are under Satan's government: And this is the language of those that are so, even concerning God and Christ their best friends, that would not either bind them from, or bind them to, any thing but for their own good. Let us break their bonds in sunder. He was driven of the devil; those that are under Christ's government, are sweetly led with the cords of a man, and the bands of love; those that are under the devil's government are furiously driven.

4. They are much enraged against our Lord Jesus, and have a great dread and horror of him. When the man, whom they had possession of, and who spake as they would have him, saw Jesus, he roared out as one in an agony, and fell down before him to deprecate his wrath, and owned him to be the Son of God most high, that was infinitely above him, and quite too hard for him; but protested against having any league or confederacy with him, (which might sufficiently have silenced the blasphemous cavils of the Scribes and Pharisees) *What have I to do with thee?* The devils have neither inclination to do service to Christ, nor expectation to receive benefit by him; *What have we to do with thee?* But they dreaded his power and wrath, *I beseech thee torment me not.* They do not say, *I beseech thee save me*, but only *torment me not.* See whose language they speak that have only a dread of hell as a place of torment, but no desire of heaven as a place of holiness and love.

5. They are perfectly at the command, and under the power of our Lord Jesus; and they knew it, for they besought him that he would not command them to go *eis tois abussos*, into the deep, the place of their torment, which they acknowledged he could easily and justly do. O what a comfort is this to the Lord's people, that all the powers of darkness are under the check and control of the Lord Jesus! he has them all in a chain. He can send them to their own place when he pleaseth.

6. They delight in doing mischief. When they found there was no remedy, but they must quit their hold of this poor man, they begged they might have leave to take possession of a herd of swine, *ver. 32.* When the devil at first brought man into a miserable state, he brought a curse likewise upon the whole creation, and that became subject to enmity. And here as an instance of that extensive enmity of his when he could not destroy the man, he would destroy the swine. If he could not hurt them in their bodies, he would hurt them in their goods, which sometimes proves a great temptation to men to draw them from Christ, as here. Christ suffered them to enter into the swine, to convince the country what mischief the devil could do in it, if he should suffer him. No sooner had the devils leave, but they entered into the swine, and no sooner had they entered into them, but the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were drowned. For it is a miracle of mercy, if those whom Satan possesseth are not brought to destruction and perdition. This, and other instances, shew that that roaring lion and red dragon, seek what and whom he may devour.

7. When the devil's power is broke in any soul; that soul recovers itself, and returns into a right frame; which supposeth, that those whom Satan gets possession of, are put out of the possession of themselves. The man out of whom the devils were departed, sat at the feet of Jesus, *ver. 35.* while he was under the devil's power, he was ready to fly in the face of Jesus, but now he sits at his feet, which is a sign that he is come to his right mind. If God has possession of us, he preserves to us the government and enjoyment of ourselves, but if Satan have possession of us, he robs us of both; let his power therefore in our souls be overturned, and let him come, whose right our hearts are, and give them him; for we are never more our own, than when we are his.

Let us now see what was the effect of this miracle, of casting the legion of devils out of this man.

1. What effect it had upon the people of that country, who had lost their swine by it. The swineherd went and told it both in city and country, *ver. 34.* perhaps with a design to incense people against Christ; they told by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed, *ver. 30.* that it was by sending the devils into the swine, which was capable of an invidious representation, as if Christ could not otherwise have delivered the man out of their hands, but by delivering the swine into them. The people came out to see what was done, and to inquire into it, and they were afraid, *ver. 35.* they were taken with great fear, *ver. 37.* they were surprised and amazed at it, and knew not what to say to it; they thought more of the destruction of the swine, than of the deliverances of their poor afflicted neighbour, and of the country from the terror of his frenzy, for it was become a public nuisance, and therefore the whole multitude besought Christ to depart from them, for fear he should bring some other judgment upon them; whereas indeed we need to be afraid of Christ that are willing to forsake their sins, and give up themselves to him. But Christ took them at their word: he went up into the ship, and returned back again. Those lose their Saviour and their hopes in him, that love their swine better.

2. What effect it had upon the poor man, who had recovered himself by it. He desired Christ's company as much as others dreaded it: he besought Christ that he might be with him, as others were, that had been healed by him of evil spirits and infirmities; *ver. 2.* that Christ might be to him a protector and teacher, and that he might be to Christ for a name and a praise. He was loth to stay among those rude and brutish Gadarenes, that desired Christ to depart from them. O gather not my soul with these sinners! But Christ would not take him along with him, but sent him home, to publish among those that knew him, the great things God had done for him, and so might be a blessing to his country, as he had been a burden to it. We must sometimes deny ourselves the satisfaction even of spiritual benefits and comforts, to gain an opportunity of being serviceable to the souls of others. Perhaps Christ knew that when the resentment of the loss of their swine was a little over, they would be better disposed to consider the miracle, and therefore left the man among them to be a standing monument, and a monitor to them of it.

40. And it came to pass, that when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him. 41. ¶ And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: 42. For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying: But as he went, the people thronged him. 43. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, 44. Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd. 45. And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter, and they that were with him, said, Master, the multitude throng thee, and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? 46. And Jesus said, Some body hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me. 47. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people, for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. 48. And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace. 49. ¶ While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master. 50. But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only and she shall be made whole. 51. And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. 52. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not: she is not dead, but sleepeth. 53. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. 54. And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. 55. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. 56. And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

Christ was driven away by the Gadarenes, they were weary of him, and willing to be rid of him: But when he had crossed the water, and returned to the Galileans, they gladly received him; wished and waited for his return, and welcomed him with all their hearts when he did return, *ver. 40.* If some will not accept the favours Christ offers them, others will. If the Gadarenes be not gathered, yet there are many, among whom Christ shall be glorious. When Christ had done his work on the other side the water, he returned and found work to do in the place when he came, fresh work. They that will lay out themselves to do good, shall never want occasion for it. The wanting you have always with you.

free grace, if the same thing that is a *parable* to others, with which they are only *amused*, is a *plain truth* to us by which we are *enlightened* and *governed*, and into the mould of which we are *delivered*.

Now from the parable itself, and the explication of it. Observe,

1. The *heart of man* is a *soil* to the *seed of God's word*; it is capable of receiving it, and bringing forth the fruits of it; but unless that seed be sown in it, it will bring forth nothing valuable, our care therefore must be to bring the *seed* and the *soil* together. To what purpose have we the *seed* in the scripture, if it be not *sown*? and to what purpose have we the *soil* in our hearts, if it be not sown with that seed?

2. The *success* of the *seedness* is very much according to the nature and temper of the *soil*, and as that is, or is not disposed to receive the seed. The word of God is to us as we are, a *favour of life into life, or of death unto death*.

3. The devil is a subtil and spiteful enemy, that makes it his business to hinder our profiting by the word of God. He takes the word out of the hearts of *careless hearers*, *ver. 12. lest they should believe and be saved*, that is added here to teach us, 1. That we cannot be *saved* unless we *believe*: The word of the gospel will not be a *saving word* to us, unless it be mixed with *faith*. 2. That therefore the devil doth all he can to keep us from *believing*, to make us not heed the word when we read and hear it; or if we heed it for the present to make us forget it again, and let it slip, (*Heb. ii. 1.*) or if we remember it, to create prejudices in our minds against it, or *direct* our minds from it to something else; and all is, *lest we should believe and be saved*, lest we should believe and *rejoice*, while he believes and *trembles*.

4. Where the word of God is heard *carelessly*, there is commonly a *contempt* put upon it too. It is added here in the parable, that the seed which fell by the way-side was *trodde[n] down*, *ver. 5.* They that wilfully shut their ears against the word, do in effect trample it under their feet; they *despise the commandment of the Lord*.

5. Those on whom the word makes *some* impressions, but they are not *deep* and *durable* ones, will shew their hypocrisy in a time of trial; as the seed sown upon a rock where it gains no root, *ver. 13.* these for a *while* *believe*, a little while; their profession promiseth something, but in *time of temptation* fall away from their good beginnings: whether the temptation arise from the smiles, or from the frowns of the world, they are easily overcome by it.

6. That the *pleasures of this life* are as dangerous and mischievous thorns to choke the good seed of the word, as any other. That is added here, *ver. 14.* which was not in the other evangelists. Those that are *not intangled in the cares of this life*, nor inveigled with the deceitfulness of riches, but boast that they are dead to them, yet may be kept from heaven by an affected indolence, and the love of ease and pleasure. The delights of sense may ruin the soul, even lawful delights indulged, and too much delighted in.

7. That it is not enough that the fruit be brought forth, but it must be *brought to perfection*, it must be fully ripened, if it be not, it is as if there was no fruit at all brought forth; for that which in Matthew and Mark is said to be *unfruitful*, is the same that here is said to *bring forth none to perfection*: For, *factum non dicitur, quod non perseverat*.

8. The good ground which brings forth *good fruit*, is an *honest and good heart*, well disposed to receive instruction and commandment, *ver. 19.* a heart free from sinful pollutions, and firmly fixed for God and duty, an upright heart, a tender heart, and a heart that trembles at the word, is an honest and good heart; that having heard the word *understands* it, so it is in Matthew; *receives* it, so it is in Mark; and *keeps* it, so it is here, as the soil not only receives but keeps the seed; and the stomach not only receives, but keeps the food or physick.

9. Where the word is well kept, there is fruit brought forth *with patience*, that also is added here; there must be both bearing patience, and waiting patience; patience to suffer the tribulation and persecution which may arise because of the word. Patience to continue to the end in well-doing.

10. In consideration of all this, we ought to take heed how we hear, *ver. 18.* take heed of those things that will hinder our profiting by the word we hear, watch over our hearts in hearing, and take heed lest they betray us. Take heed lest we hear *carelessly* and slightly, lest we entertain prejudices against the word we hear upon any account; and take heed to the frame of our spirits after we have heard the word, lest we lose what we have gained.

2. Needful instruction given to those that are appointed to preach the word, and to those also that have heard it.

(1.) Those that have *received the gift must minister the same*. Ministers that have the dispensing of the gospel committed to them, people that have profited by the word, and are thereby qualified to profit others, must look upon themselves as lighted candles; ministers must in solemn authoritative preaching, and people in brotherly, familiar discourse, diffuse their light, for a candle must not be covered with a vessel, or put under a bed, *ver. 16.* Ministers and Christians are to be lights in the world, *holding forth the word of life*, their light must shine before men; they must not only be good, but do good.

(2.) We must expect that what is now done *in secret*, and from unseen springs, will shortly be manifested and made known, *ver. 17.* What is committed to you in secret, should be made manifest by you; for your master did not give you talents to be buried, but to be traded with: Let that which is now hid be made known, for if it be not manifested by you, it will be manifested against you, will be produced in evidence of your treachery.

(3.) The gifts we have will either be continued to us, or taken from us, according as we do or do not make use of them for the glory of God, and the edification of our brethren, *ver. 18.* *Whosoever hath to him shall be given*, he that hath gifts and doth good with them shall have more; he that *buried his talent*, shall lose it. From him that has not, shall be taken away even that which he hath, so it is in Mark, that which he seemed to have, so it is in Luke. Note, The grace that is lost was but seeming grace, was never true. Men do but seem to have what they do not use, and shews of religion will be lost and forfeited; they *went out from us, because they were not of us*; 1 John ii. 19. Let us see to it that we have grace in sincerity, the *root of the matter* found in us, and that is a good part which shall never be taken away from those that have it.

3. Great encouragement given to those that prove themselves faithful hearers of the word, by being *doers of the work*, in a particular instance of Christ's respect to his disciples, in preferring them even before his nearest relations, *ver. 19, 20, 21.* which passage or story we had twice before. Observe, (1.) What crowding there was after Christ, there was no coming near for the throng of people that attended him; who though they were crowded never so much, would not be crowded out from his congregation. (2.) That some of his nearest kindred were least solicitous to hear him preach. Instead of getting within, as they might easily have done, if they had come in time, desiring to hear him, they stood without desiring to see him: and probably out of a foolish fear, lest he should spend himself with

too much speaking, designing nothing but to interrupt him, and oblige him to break off. (3.) That Jesus Christ would rather be busy at his work than conversing with his friends. He would not leave his preaching to speak with his mother and his brethren, for it was his *meat and drink* to be so employed. (4.) That Christ is pleased to own those that are his nearest and dearest relations, that *hear the word of God, and do it*; they are to him more than his mother and brethren.

22. ¶ Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. 23. But as they sailed, he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake, and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. 24. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind, and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. 25. And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid, wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this? for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him. 26. ¶ And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. 27. And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. 28. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee torment me not. 29. (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For often times it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains, and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.) 30. And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. 31. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep. 32. And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. 33. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choaked. 34. When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country. 35. Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus and found the man out of whom the devils had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. 36. They also which saw it, told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed. 37. ¶ Then the whole multitude of the country of Gadarenes round about, besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again. 38. Now that man out of whom the devils were departed, besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away saying, 39. ¶ Return to thine own house and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way and published throughout the whole city, how great things Jesus had done unto him.

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4. A complaint to Christ of our danger, and the distress his church is in, is enough to engage him to awake, and appear for us, *ver. 24.* They cried, *Master, Master, we perish.* The way to have our fears silenced, is to bring them to Christ, and lay them before him. Those that in sincerity call Christ *Master*, and with faith and fervency call upon him as their *Master*, may be sure he will not let them *perish*. No relief for poor souls that are under sense of guilt, and fear of wrath, like this, to go to Christ and call him *Master*, and say, *I am undone: if thou do not help me.*

5. Christ's business is to *lay storms*, as it is Satan's business to *raise them*. He can do it, he has done it, he delights to do it, for he came to *proclaim peace on earth*, *ver. 24.* He rebuked the wind, and the raging of the water, and immediately they ceased, not as at other times, by degrees, but all of a sudden there was a great calm. Thus Christ shewed, that though the devil pretends to be the prince of the power of the air, yet even there he has him in a chain.

6. When our dangers are over, it becomes us to take to ourselves the shame of our own fears, and to give to Christ the glory of his power. When Christ had turned the storm into a calm, then were they glad because they were quiet, *Psalm. cvii. 30.* And then, (1.) Christ gives them a rebuke for their inordinate fear, *ver. 25.* *Where is your faith?* Note, Many that have true faith, have it to seek when they have occasion to use it; they tremble, and are discouraged, if second causes frown upon them, a little thing disheartens them, and where is their faith then? (2.) They give him the glory of his power; they being afraid, wondered. Those that had feared the storm, now the danger was over, with good reason feared him that had filled it; and said one to another, what manner of man is this? They might as well have said, *Who is a God like unto thee?* For it is God's prerogative, to fill the noise of the sea, the noise of the waves, *Psalm. lxxv. 7.*

Secondly, His power over the devil, the prince of the power of the air: In the next passage of story he comes into a closer grapple with him than he did when he commanded the winds. Presently after the winds were stilled, they were brought to their desired haven, and arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, and there went ashore, *ver. 26, 27.* and he soon met with that which was his business over, and thought it worth his while to go through a storm to it.

We may learn a great deal out of this story concerning this world of infernal malignant spirits, which though not working now ordinarily, in the same way as here, yet we are all concerned at all times to stand upon our guard against.

1. These malignant spirits are very numerous. They that had taken possession of this one man called themselves legion, *ver. 30.* because many devils were entered into him: He had had devils a long time, *ver. 27.* But perhaps those that had been long in possession of him, upon some foresight of our Saviour's coming to make an attack upon them, and finding they could not prevent it by the storm they had raised, sent for recruits, intending this to be a decisive battle, and hoping now to be too hard for him that had cast out so many unclean spirits, and to give him a defeat; and either were, or at least would be thought to be a legion of them, formidable as an army with banners; and now at least, to be what the twentieth legion of the Roman army, which was long quartered at Chester, was stiled, *legio victrix, a victorious legion.*

2. They have an inveterate enmity to man, and all his conveniences and comforts. This man in whom the devils had got possession, and kept it long, being under their influence, wore no clothes, neither abode in any house, *ver. 27.* though cloathing, and a habitation, are two of the necessary supports of this life. Nay, and because man had a natural dread of the habitations of the dead, they forced this man to abide in the tombs, to make him so much the more a terror to himself, and to all about him, so that his soul had as much cause as ever any man's had to be weary of his life, and to choose strangling and death rather.

3. They are very strong and fierce and unenly, and hated and scorned to be restrained, *ver. 29.* He was kept bound in chains and in fetters, that he might not be mischievous either to others or to himself, but he brake the bands. Note, Those that are ungovernable by any other, thereby shew that they are under Satan's government: And this is the language of those that are so, even concerning God and Christ their best friends, that would not either bind them from, or bind them to, any thing but for their own good. Let us break their bonds in sunder. He was driven of the devil; those that are under Christ's government, are sweetly led with the cords of a man, and the hands of love; those that are under the devil's government are furiously driven.

4. They are much enraged against our Lord Jesus, and have a great dread and horror of him. When the man, whom they had possession of, and who spake as they would have him, saw Jesus, he roared out as one in an agony, and fell down before him to deprecate his wrath, and owned him to be the Son of God most high, that was infinitely above him, and quite too hard for him; but protested against having any league or confederacy with him, (which might sufficiently have silenced the blasphemous cavils of the Scribes and Pharisees) *What have I to do with thee?* The devils have neither inclination to do service to Christ, nor expectation to receive benefit by him; *What have we to do with thee?* But they dreaded his power and wrath, I beseech thee torment me not. They do not say, I beseech thee save me, but only torment me not. See whose language they speak that have only a dread of hell as a place of torment, but no desire of heaven as a place of holiness and love.

5. They are perfectly at the command, and under the power of our Lord Jesus; and they knew it, for they besought him that he would not command them to go into the sea, into the deep, the place of their torment, which they acknowledge he could easily and justly do. O what a comfort is this to the Lord's people, that all the powers of darkness are under the check and control of the Lord Jesus! he has them all in a chain. He can send them to their own place when he pleareth.

6. They delight in doing mischief. When they found there was no remedy, but they must quit their hold of this poor man, they begged they might have leave to take possession of a herd of swine, *ver. 32.* When the devil at first brought man into a miserable state, he brought a curse likewise upon the whole creation, and that became subject to enmity. And here as an instance of that extensive enmity of his when he could not destroy the man, he would destroy the swine. If he could not hurt them in their bodies, he would hurt them in their goods, which sometimes proves a great temptation to men to draw them from Christ, as here. Christ suffered them to enter into the swine, to convince the country what mischief the devil could do in it, if he should suffer him. No sooner had the devils leave, but they entered into the swine, and no sooner had they entered into them, but the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were drowned. For it is a miracle of mercy, if those whom Satan possesseth are not brought to destruction and perdition. This, and other instances, shew that that roaring lion and red dragon, seek what and whom he may devour.

7. When the devil's power is broke in any soul, that soul recovers itself, and returns into a right frame; which supposeth, that those whom Satan gets possession of, are put out of the possession of themselves. The man out of whom the devils were departed, sat at the feet of Jesus, *ver. 35.* while he was under the devil's power, he was ready to fly in the face of Jesus, but now he sits at his feet, which is a sign that he is come to his right mind. If God has possession of us, he preserves to us the government and enjoyment of ourselves, but if Satan have possession of us, he robs us of both; let his power therefore in our souls be overturned, and let him come, whose right our hearts are, and give them him; for we are never more our own, than when we are his.

Let us now see what was the effect of this miracle, of casting the legion of devils out of this man.

1. What effect it had upon the people of that country, who had lost their swine by it. The scribe said, and told it both in city and country, *ver. 34.* perhaps with a design to incense people against Christ; they told by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed, *ver. 36.* that it was by sending the devils into the swine, which was capable of an invidious representation, as if Christ could not otherwise have delivered the man out of their hands, but by delivering the swine into them. The people came out to see what was done, and to inquire into it, and they were afraid, *ver. 35.* they were taken with great fear, *ver. 37.* they were surprized and amazed at it, and knew not what to say to it; they thought more of the destruction of the swine, than of the deliverances of their poor afflicted neighbour, and of the country from the terror of his frenzy, for it was become a public nuisance, and therefore the whole multitude besought Christ to depart from them, for fear he should bring some other judgment upon them; whereas indeed we need to be afraid of Christ that are willing to forsake their sins, and give up themselves to him. But Christ took them at their word: he went up into the ship, and returned back again. Those lose their Saviour and their hopes in him, that love their swine better.

2. What effect it had upon the poor man, who had recovered himself by it. He desired Christ's company as much as others dreaded it: he besought Christ that he might be with him, as others were, that had been healed by him of evil spirit, and infirmities; *ver. 2.* that Christ might be to him a protector and teacher, and that he might be to Christ for a name and a praise. He was loth to stay among those rude and brutish Gadarenes, that desired Christ to depart from them. O gather not my soul with these sinners! But Christ would not take him along with him, but sent him home, to publish among those that knew him, the great things God had done for him, and so might be a blessing to his country, as he had been a burden to it. We must sometimes deny ourselves the satisfaction even of spiritual benefits and comforts, to gain an opportunity of being serviceable to the souls of others. Perhaps Christ knew that when the resentment of the loss of their swine was a little over, they would be better disposed to consider the miracle, and therefore left the man among them to be a standing monument, and a monitor to them of it.

40. And it came to pass, that when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him. 41. And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: 42. For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying: But as he went, the people thronged him. 43. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, 44. Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd. 45. And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter, and they that were with him, said, Master, the multitude throng thee, and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? 46. And Jesus said, Some body hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me. 47. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people, for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. 48. And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace. 49. ¶ While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master. 50. But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole. 51. And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. 52. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not: she is not dead, but sleepeth. 53. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. 54. And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. 55. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. 56. And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

Christ was driven away by the Gadarenes, they were weary of him, and willing to be rid of him: But when he had crossed the water, and returned to the Galileans, they gladly received him; wiped and waited for his return, and welcomed him with all their heart, when he did return, *ver. 40.* If some will not accept the favours Christ offers them, others will. If the Gadarenes be not gathered, yet there are many, among whom Christ shall be glorious. When Christ had done his work on the other side the water, he returned and found work to do in the place when he came, fresh work. They that will lay out themselves to do good, shall never want occasion for it. The wanting you have always with you.

We have here two miracles interwoven, as they were in Matthew and Mark. The raising of Jairus's daughter to life, and the cure of the woman that had an issue of blood, as he was going in a crowd to Jairus's house. We have here,

First, A public address made to Christ, by a ruler of the synagogue, whose name was Jairus, on the behalf of a little daughter of his, that was very ill, and, in the apprehension of all about her *lay a dying*. This address was very humble and reverent; Jairus, though a ruler, *fell down at Jesus's feet*, as owning him to be a ruler above him. It was very impetuous, he besought him that he would *come into his house*; not having the faith, at least not having the thought of the centurion, that desired Christ only to *speak the healing word* at a distance: But Christ complied with his request, he went along with him; strong faith shall be applauded, and yet weak faith shall not be rejected. In the houses where sickness and death is, it is very desirable to have the presence of Christ. When Christ was going, *the people thronged him*, some out of curiosity to see him, others out of an affection to him. Let us not complain of a crowd and a throng and a hurry, as long as we are in the way of our duty and *doing good*; but otherwise it is what every wise man will keep himself out of as much as he can.

Secondly, Here is a *secret application* made to Christ by a woman ill of a bloody issue, which had been the consumption of her body, and the consumption of her purse too, for *she had spent all her living upon physicians*, and was never the better, *ver. 43*. The nature of her disease was such, that she did not care for making a public complaint of it, it was agreeable to the modesty of her sex to be very shy of speaking of it, and therefore she took this opportunity of coming to Christ in a crowd; and the more people were present, the more likely she thought it was that she should be concealed. Her faith was very strong, for she doubted not but by the touch of the hem of his garment she should derive from him healing virtue sufficient for her relief, looking upon him to be such a full fountain of mercies, that she should find a cure, and be not *miss it*. Thus there is many a poor soul healed and helped and saved by Christ, that is *lost in a crowd*, and that no body takes notice of. The woman found an immediate change for the better in herself, and that her disease was cured, *ver. 44*. As believers have comfortable communion with Christ, so they have comfortable communications from him *inognito*; *meat to eat that the world knows not of*, and *joy that a stranger doth not intermeddle with*.

Thirdly, Here is a *discovery* of this sacred cure, to the glory both of the Physician and the patient.

1. Christ takes notice that there is cure wrought, *virtue is gone out of me*, *ver. 46*. Those that have been healed by virtue derived from Christ, must own it, for he knows it. He speaks of it here, not in a way of complaint, as if he were hereby either *weakened*, or *wronged*, but in a way of complacency; it was his delight, that *virtue* was gone out of him to do any good, and he did not grudge it to the meanest, they were as welcome to it as to the light and heat of the sun; nor had he the less virtue in him for the going out of virtue from him, for he is an overflowing fountain.

2. The poor patient owns her case, and the benefit she had received, *ver. 47*. *When she saw she was not hid, she came and fell down before him*. Note, The consideration of this, that we cannot be *hid from Christ*, should engage us to *pour out our hearts before him*, and to shew before him all our sin, and all our trouble. *She came trembling*, and yet her faith saved her, *ver. 48*. Note, There may be trembling, where yet there is saving faith. *She declared before all the people, for what cause she had touched him*, because she believed that a touch would cure her, and it did so. Christ's patients should communicate their experiences to one another.

3. The great Physician confirms her cure, and sends her away with the comfort of it, *ver. 48*. *Be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole*. Jacob got the blessing from Isaac clandestinely, and by a wife; but when the fraud was discovered, Isaac ratified it designedly; it was obtained surreptitiously and under-hand, but it was secured and seconded above-board, so was the cure. He is *blessed*, and he *shall be blessed*; so here, she is healed, and she *shall be healed*.

Fourthly, Here is an encouragement to Jairus not to distrust the power of Christ, though his daughter was now dead, and they that brought him the tidings, advised him not to give the Master any further trouble about her; *fear not, faith Christ, believe only*. Note, Our faith in Christ should be hold and daring, as well as our zeal for him. And they that are willing to do any thing for him, may depend upon his doing great things for them, above what they are able to ask or think. When the patient is dead, there is no room for prayer, or the use of means; but here, though the child is dead, yet believe, and all shall be well. *Post mortem Medicus* is an absurdity, but not *Post mortem Christus*.

Fifthly, The preparatives for raising of her to life again. (1.) The choice Christ made of witnesses that should see the miracles wrought. A crowd followed him, but perhaps they were rude and noisy; however it was not fit to let such a multitude come into a gentleman's house, especially now they were all in sorrow, and therefore he sent them back; and not because he was afraid to let the miracles pass their scrutiny, for he raised Lazarus and the widow's son publicly. He took none with him but Peter, and James, and John, that triumvirate of his disciples that he was most intimate with, designing them three, with the parents, to be the only spectators of the miracle, they being a competent number to attest the truth of it. (2.) The check he gave to the mourners; *they all wept and bewailed her*, for, it seems, she was a very agreeable hopeful child, and dear not only to the parents, but to all the neighbours. But Christ bid them *not weep*, for *she is not dead but sleepeth*. He means, as to her peculiar case, that she was not dead for good and all, but that she should now shortly be raised to life, so that would be to her friends, but as if she had been but a few hours asleep. But it is applicable to all that died in the Lord, therefore we should not sorrow for them as those that have *no hope*, because death is but a sleep to them; not only as it is a rest from all the toils of the days of time, but as there will be a resurrection, a waking and rising again to all the glories of the days of eternity. This was a comfortable word which Christ said to these mourners, yet they wickedly ridiculed it, and laughed him to scorn for it; here was a *pearl cast before swine*. They were ignorant of the scriptures of the Old Testament, who bantered it as an absurd thing to call death a sleep, yet this good came out of evil, that hereby the truth of the miracle was evinced, for they knew that *she was dead*, they were certain of it, and therefore nothing less than a divine power could restore her to life. We find not any answer that he made them, but he soon explained himself, I hope to their conviction, and that they would never again laugh at any word of his. But he put them all out, *ver. 54*. they were unworthy to be the witnesses of this work of wonder; they who in the midst of their mourning were so merrily disposed, as to laugh at him for what he said, would, it may be, have found something to laugh at in what he did, and therefore are justly shut out.

Sixthly, Her return to life after a short visit to the congregation of the dead, *ver. 55*. He took her by the hand, as we do by one that we would awake out of sleep, and help up, and he called, saying, *Maid, arise*: Thus the hand of Christ's grace goes along with the calls of his word, to make them effectual. Here it is expressed what was only implied in the other Evangelists,

That *her spirit came again*; her soul returned again to animate her body. This plainly proves, that the soul exists and acts in a state of separation from the body, and therefore is immortal; that death doth not extinguish this candle of the Lord, but takes it out of a dark lantern. It is not, as Grotius well observes, the *αἷμα* or temperament of the body, or any thing that dies with it; but it is *ἀθάνατον τι*, something that subsists by itself, which after death is somewhere else than where the body is. Where the soul of this child was in the interval we are not told, it was in the hand of the Father of spirits, to whom all souls at death return. When her spirit came again, she arose and made it appear she was alive by her motion, as she did also by her appetite, for Christ commanded to give her meat. As babes new-born, so those that are newly raised, desire spiritual food, that they may grow thereby. In the last verse we need not wonder to find her parents astonished, but if that implies, that they only were so, and not the other bye-standers, who had laughed Christ to scorn, we may well wonder at their stupidity, which perhaps was the reason why Christ would not have it proclaimed, as well as to give an instance of his humility.

C H A P. IX.

In this chapter we have, (1.) The commission Christ gave his twelve apostles to go out for some time to preach the gospel, and confirm it by miracles, *ver. 1—6*. (2.) Herod's terror at the growing greatness of our Lord Jesus, *ver. 7—9*. (3.) The apostles' return to Christ, his retirement with them into a place of solitude; the great resort of people to them notwithstanding, and his feeding five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes, *ver. 10—17*. (4.) His discourse with his disciples concerning himself, and his own sufferings for them, and theirs for him, *ver. 18—27*. (5.) Christ's transfiguration, *ver. 28—36*. (6.) The cure of a lunatick child, *ver. 37—42*. (7.) The repeated notice Christ gave his disciples of his approaching sufferings, *ver. 43—45*. (8.) His check to the ambition of his disciples, *ver. 46—48*, and to their monopolizing of the power over devils to themselves, *ver. 49, 50*. (9.) The rebuke he gave them for an over-due resentment of an affront given him by a village of the Samaritans, *ver. 51—56*. (10.) The answer he gave to several that were inclined to follow him, but not considerably, or not zealously and heartily inclined, *ver. 57—62*.

1. THEN he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. 2. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. 3. And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece. 4. And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. 5. And whosoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them. 6. And they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where. 7. ¶ Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead: 8. And of some, that Elias had appeared: and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again. 9. And Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him.

Here is, 1. The method Christ took to spread his gospel; to diffuse and enforce the light of it. He had travelled about himself preaching and healing, but he could be only in one place at a time; and therefore now he sent his twelve disciples abroad, who by this time were pretty well instructed in the nature of the present dispensation, and able to instruct others, and to deliver to them what they had received from the Lord: Let them disperse themselves some one way, and some another, to preach the kingdom of God, as it was now about to be set up by the Messiah; to bring people acquainted with the spiritual nature and tendency of it, and to persuade them to come into the interests and measures of it. And for the confirming of their doctrine, because it was new and surprising, and very different from what they had been taught by the Scribes and Pharisees, and because so much depended upon men's receiving, or not receiving it, he empowered them to confirm it by miracles, *ver. 1, 2*. He gave them authority over all devils, to dispossess them, and cast them out, though never so numerous, so subtil, so fierce, so obstinate. Christ designed a total rout and ruin to the kingdom of darkness, and therefore gave them power over all devils. He authorized and appointed them likewise to cure diseases, and to heal the sick, which would make them welcome wherever they came; and not only convince people's judgements, but gain their affections.

This was their commission: Now observe,

1. What Christ directed them to do in prosecution of this commission at this time, when they were not to go far, or be out long.

1. They must not be solicitous to recommend themselves to people's esteem by their outward appearance. Now they began to set up for themselves, they must have no dress, nor study to make any other figure, than what they had made while they followed him; they must go as they were, and not change their clothes, or so much as put on a pair of new shoes.

2. They must depend upon providence, and the kindness of their friends, to furnish them with what was convenient for them. They must not take with them either bread or money, and yet believe they should not want. Christ would not have his disciples shew of receiving the kindnesses of their friends, but rather expect them: Yet St. Paul saw cause not to go by this rule, when he laboured with his hands rather than be burdensome.

3. They must not change their lodgings, as suspecting that those that entertained them were weary of them; they have no reason to be so, for the ark is a guest that always pays well for its entertainment, *ver. 4*. *Whosoever house you enter into, there abide*, that the people may know where to find you; that your friends may know you are not backward to serve them, and your enemies may know you are not ashamed or afraid to face them; *there abide till you depart out of that city*; stay with those you are used to.

4. They must put on authority, and speak warning to those who refused them, as well as comfort to those that received them, *ver. 5*. If there be any place that will not entertain you, if the magistrates deny you admission, and threaten to treat you as vagants, leave them, do not force yourselves upon them,

them, nor run yourselves into danger among them, but at the same time bind them over to the judgment of God for it; *shake off the dust of your feet* for a testimony against them, that will, as it were, be produced in evidence against them, that the messenger of the gospel had been among them, to make them a fair offer of grace and peace, for this dust they left behind there; so that when they perish at last in their infidelity, this will lay and leave their blood upon their own heads. *Shake off the dust of your feet*, as much as to say, you abandon their city, and will have no more to do with them.

2. What did they in prosecution of this commission, *ver. 6. They departed*, though from their master's presence, yet having still his spiritual presence with them, his eye and his arm going along with them, and thus borne up in their work, they went through the towns, some or other of them, all the towns within the circuit appointed them, *preaching the gospel and healing every where*; Their work was the same with their Master's, doing good both to souls and bodies.

2. Here is Herod's perplexity and vexation at this. The deriving of Christ's power to those who were sent forth in his name, and acted by authority from him, was an amazing and convincing proof of his being the Messiah, above any thing else; that he could not only work miracles himself, but empower others to work miracles too; this spread his fame more than any thing, and made the rays of this *Sun of righteousness* the stronger, by the reflexions of them even from the earth; from such mean illiterate men as the apostles were, who had nothing else to recommend them, or to raise any expectations from them, but that *then had been with Jesus*, Acts iv. 13. When the country sees such as those *healing the sick* in the name of Jesus, it gives it an alarm. Now observe,

1. The various speculations it raised among the people; who though they thought not rightly, yet could not but think honourably of our Lord Jesus, and that he was an extraordinary person, one come from the other world; that either John Baptist, who was lately persecuted and slain for the cause of God, or one of the old prophets, that had been persecuted and slain long since in that cause, was risen again, to be recompensed for their sufferings by this honour put upon them. Or that Elias, who was taken alive to heaven in a fiery chariot, had appeared as an express from heaven, *ver. 7, 8.*

2. The great perplexity it created in the mind of Herod; when he had heard of all that was done by Christ, his guilty conscience flew in his face, and he was ready to conclude with them that said *John was risen from the dead*. He thought he had got clear of John, and should be never more troubled with him, but it seems he is mistaken; either John is come to life again, or here is another in his spirit and power, for God will never leave himself without witness. What shall I do now? saith Herod, John have I beheaded, but who is this? Is he carrying on John's work, or is he come to avenge John's death; John baptized, but he doth not; John did no miracle, but he doth; and therefore appears more formidable than John. Note, Those who oppose God, will find themselves more and more embarrassed. However he desired to see him, whether he resembled John or no; but he might soon have been put out of his pain, if he would but have informed himself of that which thousands knew, that Jesus preached and wrought miracles a great while before John was beheaded, and therefore could not be John raised from the dead. He desired to see him, and why did he not go and see him? It is likely, because he thought it below him either to go to him, or to send for him; he had enough of John Baptist, and cared not for raving to do with any more such reprovers of sin. He desired to see him, but we do not find that ever he did, till he saw him at his bar, and then he, and his men of war set him at nought, Luke xxiii. 11. Had he persecuted his convictions now, and gone to see him, who knows but a happy change might have been wrought in him; but delaying it now, his heart was hardened; and when he did see him, he was as much prejudiced against him as any other?

10. ¶ And the apostles when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place, belonging to the city called Bethsaida. 11. And the people when they knew it, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing. 12. And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place. 13. But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes: except we should go and buy meat for all this people. 14. For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company. 15. And they did so, and made them all sit down. 16. Then he took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude. 17. And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them, twelve baskets.

Here is, 1. The account which the twelve gave their Master of the success of their ministry. They were not long out, but when they returned, they told him all that they had done, as became servants who were sent on an errand. They told him what they had done, that if they had done any thing amiss they might mend it next time.

2. Their retirement for a little breathing. He took them and went aside privately into a desert place, that they might have some relaxation from business, and not be always upon the stretch. Note, He that hath appointed our man-servant and maid-servant to rest, would have his servants to rest too. Those in the most public stations, and that are more publicly useful, yet must sometimes go aside privately, both for the repose of their bodies to recruit them, and for the furnishing of their minds by meditation for further public work.

3. The resort of the people to him, and the kind reception he gave them. They followed him, though it was in a desert place; for that is no desert where Christ is. And though they hereby disturbed the repose he designed here for himself and his disciples, yet he welcomed them, *ver. 11.* Note, Pious zeal may excuse a little rudeness, it did with Christ, and should with us. Though they came unseasonably, yet Christ gave them what they

came for. (1.) He spake unto them of the kingdom of God, the laws of that kingdom with which they must be bound, and the privileges of that kingdom with which they might be blessed. (2.) He healed them that had need of healing, and in a sense of their need made their application to him: Though the disease was never so inveterate, and incurable by the physicians, though the patients were never so poor and mean, yet Christ healed them. There is healing in Christ for all that need it, whether for soul or body. Christ hath still a power over bodily diseases, and heals his people that need healing. Sometimes he sees that we need the sickness for the good of our souls more than the healing, for the ease of our bodies, and then we must be willing for a season, because there is need to be in heaviness; but when he sees we need healing we shall have it. Death is his servant to heal the saints of all diseases. He heals spiritual maladies by his graces, by his comforts, and has for each what their case calls for; relief for every exigence.

4. The plentiful provision Christ made for the multitude that attended him; with five loaves of bread, and two fishes he fed five thousand men. This story we had twice before, and shall meet with it again; and it is the only miracle of our Saviour's that is recorded by all the four evangelists.

Let us only observe out of it,

1. That those who diligently attend upon Christ in the way of duty, and therein deny, or expose themselves, are made to forget themselves, and their outward conveniences by their zeal for God's house, are taken under his particular care, and may depend upon *Jehovah-jireh*, the Lord will provide. He will not see those that fear him, and serve him faithfully, want any good thing.

2. That our Lord Jesus was of a free and generous spirit. His disciples said, *Send them away that they may get victuals*; but Christ said, no, give ye them to eat; let what we have go as far as it will reach, and they are welcome to it. This he has taught both ministers and Christians to use hospitality without grudging, 1 Pet. iv. 9. Those that have but a little, let them do what good they can with that little, and that is the way to make it more. There is that scatters, and yet increases.

3. Jesus Christ has not only physic, but food for all those that by faith apply themselves to him: he not only heals them that need healing, cures the diseases of the soul, but feeds them too that need feeding, supports the spiritual life, relieves the necessities of it, and satisfies the desires of it. Christ has provided not only to save the soul from perishing by its diseases, but to nourish the soul unto life eternal, and strengthen it for all spiritual exercises.

4. All the gifts of Christ are to be received by the church in a regular, orderly manner: *Make them sit down by fifties in a company*. The number of each company is taken notice of here, *ver. 14.* which Christ appointed for the better distribution of the meat, and the easier computation of the number of the guests.

5. When we are receiving our creature-comforts, we must look up to heaven; Christ did so, to teach us to do so. We must acknowledge that we receive them from God, and that we are unwilling to receive them; that we owe them all, and all the comfort we have in them, to the mediation of Christ, by whom the curse is removed, and the covenant of peace settled; that we depend upon God's blessing upon them to make them serviceable to us, and desire that blessing.

6. The blessing of Christ will make a little go a great way, and the little that the righteous man has, better than the riches of many wicked, a dinner of herbs better than a stalled ox.

7. Those whom Christ feeds, he fills; to whom he gives, he gives enough; as there is in him enough for all, so there is enough for each. He replenishes every hungry soul, abundantly satisfies it with the goodness of his house. Here were fragments taken up, to assure us that in our Father's house there is bread enough and to spare. We are not straitened or stinted in him.

18. ¶ And it came to pass as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am? 19. They answering, said, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias: and others say, That one of the old prophets is risen again. 20. He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering, said, The Christ of God. 21. And he strictly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing: 22. Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day. 23. ¶ And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. 24. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. 25. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? 26. For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels. 27. But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

In these verses we have Christ discoursing with his disciples about the great things that pertained to the kingdom of God; and one circumstance of this discourse is taken notice of here, which we had not in the other evangelists, that Christ was alone praying, and his disciples with him, when he entered into this discourse, *ver. 18.* Observe, (1.) Though Christ had much public work to do, yet he found some time to be alone in private, for converse both with himself and with his Father, and with his disciples. (2.) When Christ was alone he was praying. It is good for us to improve our solitudes for devotion, that when we are alone we may not be alone, but may have the Father with us. (3.) When Christ was alone praying, his disciples were with him to join with him in his prayer: so that this was a family-prayer. Housekeepers ought to pray with their households, parents with their children, masters with their servants, teachers and tutors with their scholars and pupils. (4.) Christ prayed with them before he examined them, that they might be directed and encouraged to answer him, by his prayers for them. Those we give instructions to, we should put up prayers for and with. He discoursed with them,

1. Concerning himself: And enquires,

(1.) What the people said of him. Whom say the people that I am? Christ knew

knew better than they did, but would have his disciples made sensible by the mistakes of others, concerning him, how happy they were that were led into a knowledge of him and of the truth concerning him. We should take notice of others' ignorance and errors, that we may be the more thankful to him who has manifested himself unto us, and not unto the world, and may pity them, and do what we can to help them, and to teach them better.

They tell him what conjectures concerning him, they had heard in their converse with the common people: And ministers would know the better to suit their instructions, reproofs, and counsels, to the case of ordinary people, if they did but converse more frequently and familiarly with them; they would then be the better able to say what is proper to rectify their notions, and correct their irregularities, and remove their prejudices. The more conversant the physician is with his patient, the better he knows what to do for him. Some said he was John Baptist, who was beheaded but the other day; others Elias, or one of the old prophets; any thing but what he was.

(2.) What they said of him. Now see what an advantage you have by your discipleship, you know better things: so we do, saith Peter, thanks be to our Master for it, we know that thou art the *Christ of God*, the *Anointed of God*, the Messiah promised. It is matter of unspeakable comfort to us, that our Lord Jesus is *God's Anointed*, for then he has an unquestionable authority and ability for his undertaking; for his being *anointed* signifies his being both appointed to it, and qualified for it.

Now one would have expected that Christ should have charged his disciples, who were fully apprised and assured of this truth, to publish it to every one they met with; no, he *strictly charged them to tell no man that thing as yet*, because there is a time for all things: after his resurrection, which completed the proof of it, Peter made the temple ring of it, that *God has made this Jesus both Lord and Christ*, Acts ii. 36. But as yet the evidence was not ready to be summed up, and therefore it must be concealed; and while it was so, we may conclude that the believing of it was not necessary to salvation.

2. Concerning his own sufferings and death, of which he had yet said little. But now his disciples were well established in the belief of his being the Christ, and able to bear it, he speaks of them expressly, and with great assurance, ver. 22. It comes in as a reason, why they must not yet preach that he was the Christ, because the wonders that would attend his death and resurrection, would be the most convincing proof of his being the Christ of God. It was by his *exaltation to the right hand of the Father*, that he was fully declared to be the Christ, and by the sending of the Spirit thereupon, Acts i. 33. and therefore wait till that is done.

3. Concerning their sufferings for him: So far must they be from thinking how to *prevent* his sufferings, they must rather prepare for their own.

1. We must *accustom* ourselves to all instances of *self-denial* and *patience*, ver. 23. This is the best preparative for martyrdom: We must live a life of self-denial and mortification, and contempt of the world; we must not indulge our ease and appetite, for then it will be hard to bear toil and weariness, and wait for Christ. We are *daily* subject to affliction, and we must *accommodate* ourselves to it, and *acquiesce* in the will of God in it, and must learn to endure hardship. We frequently meet with crosses in the way of duty, though we must not pull them upon our own heads; yet when they are laid for us, we must *take them up*, carry them after Christ, and make the best of them.

2. We must *prefer the salvation and happiness of our souls before any secular concerns whatsoever*. Reckon upon it, (1.) That he, who to preserve his liberty or estate, his power or preferment, nay, or to save his life, denies Christ and his truths, willfully wrongs his conscience, and sins against God; will not only be a *fover*, but an unspeakable loser in the issue, when *profit and loss* come to be balanced. *He that will save his life upon those terms will lose it*, shall lose that which is of infinitely more value, his precious soul.

(2.) We must firmly believe also, that if we lose our lives for cleaving to Christ and our religion, we shall *save* them to our unspeakable advantage; for it shall be abundantly recompensed in the resurrection of the just, when we shall have it again, a new and eternal life. (3.) That the gain of all the world, if we should forsake Christ, and fall in with the interests of the world, would be so far from countervailing the eternal loss and ruin of the soul, that it would bear no manner of proportion to it, ver. 25. If we could be supposed to gain all the wealth, honour, and pleasure in the world by denying Christ, yet when by so doing we *lose ourselves* to all eternity, and are *cast away* at last, what good will our worldly gain do us? Observe, in Matthew and Mark the dreadful issue is a man's *losing his own soul*, here it is *losing himself*; which plainly intimates *our souls are ourselves*; *Animus cuiusque is est quisque*. The soul is the man; and it is well or ill with us, according as it is well or ill with our souls. If they perish for ever under the weight of their own guilt and corruption, it is certain *we* are undone; the body cannot be happy, though the body be greatly afflicted and oppressed in this world. If a man be himself *cast away*, *ἀπολωμένος*; if he be *damaged*; or if he be punished; *ῥημδιέται*, if he have a *multa* put upon his soul by the righteous sentence of Christ, whose cause and interest he has treacherously deserted; if it be adjudged a forfeiture of all his blessedness, and the forfeiture be taken, where is his gain? What is his hope?

3. We must therefore *never be ashamed of Christ and his gospel*, nor of any disgrace or reproach that we may undergo for our faithful adherence to him and it. For, ver. 26. *Whoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, and justly*. When the service and honour of Christ, called for his testimony and agency, be denied them, because the interest of Christ was a *despised interest*, and *every where spoken against*; and therefore he can expect no other, but that in the great day, when his case calls for Christ's appearance on his behalf, Christ will be ashamed to own such a cowardly, worldly, sneaking spirit, and will say, he is none of mine, he belongs not to me. As Christ had; so his cause has a state of *humiliation* and of *exaltation*; they, and they only, that are willing to suffer with it, when it suffers, shall reign with it, when it reigns: But those that cannot find in their hearts to share with it in its *disgrace*, and to say, If this be to be vile, I will be yet more vile, it is certain they shall have no share with it in its *triumphs*. Observe here, How Christ, to support himself and his followers under present disgraces, speaks *magnificently* of the lustre of his second coming, in prospect of which he *endured the cross, despising the shame*. (1.) He shall come in his own glory. This was not mentioned in Matthew and Mark. He shall come in the glory of the Mediator, *all that glory which the Father restored to him which he had with God before the worlds were*, which he had *deposited* and *put in pledge* as it were for the accomplishing of his undertaking, and demanded up again, when he had gone through it; *Now, O Father, glorify thou me*, John xvii. 4, 5. He shall come in *all that glory which the Father conferred upon him, when he set him at his own right hand*, and *gave him to be head over all things to the church*. In all the glory that is due to him, as the assertor of the Glory of God, and the author of the glory of all the saints. This is *his own glory*. (2.) He shall come in his Father's glory; the Father will judge the world by him, having committed all judgment to him; and therefore will pub-

lickly own him in the judgment, as the *brightness of his glory*; and the *express image* of his person. (3.) He shall come in the *glory of the holy angels*; they shall all *attend* him, and *minister* to him, and add every thing they can to the lustre of his appearance. What a figure will the blessed Jesus make in that day! Did we believe it, we would never be ashamed of him or his words now.

Lastly, To encourage them in suffering for him, he assures them, that the kingdom of God would now *shortly be set up*, notwithstanding the great opposition that was made to it, ver. 27. Though the second coming of the Son of man is at a great distance, the kingdom of God shall come in its power in the present age, while some here present are alive. They saw the kingdom of God when the Spirit was poured out, when the gospel was preached to all the world, and nations brought to Christ by it; they saw the kingdom of God triumph over the Gentile nations in their *conversion*, and over the Jewish nation in its *destruction*.

28. ¶ And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. 29. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering. 30. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: 31. Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. 32. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. 33. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said. 34. While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. 35. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. 36. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

We have here the story of Christ's transfiguration, which was designed for a specimen of that glory of his, in which he will come to judge the world, of which he had lately been speaking, and consequently an encouragement to his disciples to suffer for him, and never to be ashamed of him. We had this story before in Matthew and Mark, and it is well worthy to be repeated to us, and reconsidered by us for the confirmation of our faith in the Lord Jesus, as the *brightness of his Father's glory*, and the light of the world; for the filling of our mind with high and honourable thoughts of him, notwithstanding his being clothed with a body, and the giving of us some idea of the glory which he entered into at his ascension, and in which he now appears within the veil, and the raising and encouraging of our hopes and expectations concerning the glory reserved for all believers in the future state.

1. Here is one circumstance of the story, that seems to differ from the other two evangelists that related it. They said it was six days after the foregoing sayings, Luke saith it was about eight days after, that is, that day seven night; six whole days intervening, and it was the eighth day. Some think it was in the night that Christ was transfigured, because the disciples were sleepy, as in his agony, and in the night his appearance in splendor would be the more illustrious; and if in the night, the computation of the time would be the more doubtful and uncertain; probably in the night between the seventh and eighth day, and so about eight days.

2. Here are divers circumstances added and explained, which are very material.

1. We are here told, that Christ had this honour put upon him when he was praying. He went up into the mountain to pray, as he frequently did, ver. 28. and as he prayed he was transfigured; when Christ humbled himself to pray, he was thus exalted. He knew before that this was designed for him at this time, and therefore seeks it by prayer; Christ himself must sue out the favours that were purposed for him and promised to him; *Ask of me, and I will give thee*, Psal. ii. 8. And thus he intended to put an honour upon the duty of prayer and to recommend it to us. It is a transfiguring, transforming duty; if our hearts be elevated and enlarged in it, so as in it, to behold the glory of the Lord, we shall be changed into the same image from glory to glory, 2 Cor. iii. 18. by prayer we fetch in that wisdom and grace and joy which makes the face to shine.

2. Luke doth not use the word *transfigured* μεταμορφώθη, which Matthew and Mark used, perhaps because it had been used so much in the Pagan theology, but makes use of a phrase equivalent, *τὸ εἶδος τὰ πρόσωπα ἔστρεψεν*, the fashion of his countenance was another thing from what it had been; his face shone far beyond what Moses's did when he came down from the mount; and his raiment was white and glistering; it was *εἰσπρηνής*, a word used only here; *bright like lightning*; so that he seemed to be arrayed all with light, to cover himself with a light as with a garment.

It was said in Matthew and Mark, that Moses and Elias appeared to them, here it is said, they appeared in glory; to teach us, that saints departed are in glory; are in glorious state; they shine in glory; he being in glory they appeared with him in glory, as all the saints shall shortly do.

3. We are here told what was the subject of the discourse between Christ and the two great prophets of the Old Testament, they spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem, *ἐλεγον τὴν ἰστορίαν αὐτοῦ* — his exodus, his departure; that is, his death. (1.) The death of Christ is here called his exit, his going out, his leaving the world. Moses and Elias spake of it to him under that notion, to reconcile him to it, and to make the foresight of it the more easy to his human nature. The death of the saints is their exodus, their departure out of the Egypt of this world, their release out of a house of bondage. Some think the ascension of Christ is included here in triumph, so was his when he went from earth to heaven. (2.) This departure of his he must accomplish, for thus he was determined the matter was immutably fixed in the counsel of God, and could not be altered. (3.) He must accomplish it at Jerusalem, though his residence was mostly in Galilee, for his most spiteful enemies were at Jerusalem, and there the Sanhedrin sat, that took upon them to judge of prophets. (4.) Moses and Elias spake of this

this to intimate, that the sufferings of Christ and his entrance into his glory, was what Moses and the prophets had spoken of; see *Luke xxiv. 26, 27. 1 Pet. i. 11.* (1.) Our Lord Jesus even in his transfiguration was willing to enter into a discourse concerning his death and sufferings; to teach us, that meditations on death, as it is our departure out of this world to another, are never unreasonable, but in a special manner seasonable when at any time we are advanced, lest we should be *lifted up above measure*. In our greatest glories on earth, let us remember that here we have no continuing city.

5. We are told, which we were not before, that the disciples were *heavy with sleep*, ver. 32. when the vision first began, Peter and James and John were drowsily, and inclined to sleep; either it was late, or they were weary, or had been disturbed in their rest the night before, or perhaps a charming composing air, or some sweet and melodious sounds which disposed them to soft and gentle slumbers, were a preface to the vision; or perhaps it was owing to a sinful carelessness, when Christ was at prayer with them, they did not regard his prayer as they should have done, and to punish them for that, they were left to *sleep on now*, when he began to be *transfigured*, and to slip an opportunity of seeing how that work of wonder was wrought. These three were now asleep when Christ was in his glory, as afterwards they were, when he was in his agony; see the *weakness and frailty* of human nature, even in the best, and what need they have of the grace of God. Nothing could be more affecting to these disciples, one would think, than the glories and the agonies of their Master, and both in the highest degree, did yet neither the one nor the other would serve to *keep them awake*. What need have we to pray to God for quickening, grace, to make us not only alive, but lively. Yet that they might be competent witnesses of *this sign from heaven*, to those that demanded one, after a while they *recovered themselves*, and became perfectly awake; and then they took an exact view of all those glories, so that they were able to give a particular account, as we find one of them doth, of all that passed when they were Christ, in the holy mount, 2 Pet. i. 17.

6. It is here observed, that it was when Moses and Elias were now about to depart, that Peter said, *Lord, it is good to be here, let us make three tabernacles*; thus many times we are not sensible of the worth of our mercies, till we are about to lose them; nor covet and court their continuance, till they are upon the departure. Peter said this, *not knowing what he said*. Those know not what they say, that talk of making tabernacles on earth for glorified saints in heaven, who have better mansions in the temple there, and long to return to them.

7. It is here added concerning the cloud that overshadowed them, that they *feared as they entered into the cloud*. This cloud was a token of God's more peculiar presence, it was in a cloud that God of old took possession of the tabernacle and temple, and when the cloud covered the tabernacle, Moses was not able to enter, Exod. xl 34, 35. and when it filled the temple, the priests could not stand to minister by reason of it, 2 Chron. v. 14. such a cloud was this, and then no wonder the disciples were afraid to enter into it. But never let any be afraid to enter into a cloud with Jesus Christ, for he will be sure to bring them safe through it.

8. The voice which came from heaven, is here and in Mark related, not so fully as in Matthew; *this is my beloved Son, hear him*; though these words, in whom I am well pleased, which we have both in Matthew and Peter, are not expressed, they are implied in that, *this is my beloved son*; for whom he loves, and in whom he is well pleased, comes all to one; we are accepted in the beloved.

Lastly, The apostles are here said to have kept this vision private, they *told no man in those days*; reserving the discovery of it for another opportunity; when the evidences of Christ's being the Son of God were completed in the pouring out of the Spirit, and that doctrine was to be published to all the world. As there is a time to speak, so there is a time to keep silence. Every thing is beautiful and useful in its season.

37. ¶ And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him. 38. And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son, for he is mine only child. 39. And lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out, and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him, hardly departeth from him. 40. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not. 41. And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither. 42. And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him: and Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and he healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

The passage of this story in Matthew and Mark follows immediately upon that of Christ's transfiguration, and his discourse with his disciples after it; but here it is said to be on the next day, as then were coming down from the hill; which confirms the conjecture, that Christ was transfigured in the night, and it should seem, though they did not make tabernacles as Peter proposed, yet they found some shelter to repose themselves in all night, for it was not till next day, that they came down from the hill; and when he found things in some disorder among his disciples, though not so bad as Moses did when he came down from the mount. When wife and good men are in their beloved retirements, they would do well to consider whether they are not wanted in their public stations.

In this story here, observe,
1. How forward the people were to receive Christ in his return to them; though he had been but a little while absent, much people met him, as at other times much people followed him, for so it was foretold concerning him, that to him should the gathering of the people be.

2. How importunate the father of the lunatic child was with Christ for help for him, ver. 38. *I beseech thee, look upon my son*, that is his request, and it is a very modest one; one compassionate look from Christ is enough to set every thing to rights. Let us bring ourselves and our children to Christ to be looked upon. His plea is, he is mine only child; they that have many children may balance their affliction in one, with their comfort in the rest; yet if it be an only child that is a grief, the affliction in that may be balanced with the love of God in giving his only begotten Son for us.

3. How deplorable the case of the child was, ver. 39. He was under the power of an evil spirit that took him, and diseases of that nature are more frightful than such as arise merely from natural causes; when the fit seized him, without any warning given, he suddenly cried out, and many a time

his shriek, had pierced the heart of his tender father. This malicious spirit tare him, and bruised him, and departed not from him, but with great difficulty and a deadly gripe at parting. O the afflictions of the afflicted in this world? and what mischief doth Satan do where he gets possession! But happy they that have access to Christ!

4. How defective the disciples were in their faith. Though Christ had given them power over unclean spirit, yet they could not cast out this evil spirit, ver. 40. Either they distrusted the power they were to fetch in strength from, or the commission given to them, or did exert themselves in prayer as they ought, for this Christ reproved them. O faithless and perverse generation. Dr. Clarke understands this as spoken to disciples; *Will ye be yet so faithless and full of distrust, that ye cannot execute the commission I have given you?*

5. How effectual the cure was which Christ wrought upon this child, ver. 42. Christ can do that for us which his disciples cannot. Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, then when he raged most. The devil threw the child down and tare him, distorted him, so as if he would have pulled him to pieces. But one word from Christ healed the child, and made good the damage the devil had done him. And it is here added, that he delivered him again to his father. Note, When our children are recovered from sickness, we must receive them as delivered to us again, receive them as life from the dead, and as when we first received them. It is comfortable to receive them from the hand of Christ, to see him delivering them to us again, here take this child and be thankful; take it and bring it up for me, for thou hast it again from me. Take it, and do not set thy heart too much upon it. With such cautions as these, parents should receive their children from Christ's hand, and then with comforts put them again into his hands.

43. And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples, 44. Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men. 45. But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying. 46. ¶ Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest. 47. And Jesus perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him. 48. And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great. 49. And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. 50. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us, is for us.

We may observe here,

1. The impression which Christ's miracles made upon all that beheld them, ver. 43. They were all amazed at the mighty power of God, which they could not but see in all the miracles Christ wrought. Note, The works of God's almighty power are amazing, especially those that were wrought by the hand of the Lord Jesus; for he is the power of God, and his name is Wonderful. Their wonder is universal, they wondered every one; and so were the causes of it, they wondered at all things which Jesus did, all his actions had something uncommon and surprising in them.

2. The notice Christ gave to his disciples of his approaching sufferings; the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men, wicked men, men of the worst character; they shall be permitted to abuse him at their pleasure. That is here implied which is expressed by the other evangelists, then shall kill him. But that which is peculiar here is, (1.) The connection of this with what goes next before of the admiration with which the people were struck at beholding of Christ's miracles, ver. 43. while they all wondered at all things which Jesus did, he said this to his disciples. They had a fond conceit of his temporal kingdom, and that he should reign and they with him in secular pomp and power; and now they thought this mighty power of his would easily effect the thing, and his interest gained by his miracles in the people, would contribute to it; and therefore Christ who knew what was in their hearts, takes this occasion to tell them again what he had told them before, that he was so far from having men delivered into his hands, that he must be delivered into the hands of men; so far from living in honour that he must die in disgrace; and all his miracles and the interest he has by them gained in the hearts of the people will not be able to prevent it. (2.) The solemn preface with which it is introduced; let these sayings sink down into your ears; i. e. take special notice of what I say, and mix faith with it; let not the notions you have of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, stop your ears against it, nor make you unwilling to believe it. Admit what I say, and submit to it. Let it sink down into your hearts; so the Syriac and Arabic read it: the word of Christ doth us no good, unless we let it sink down into our heads and hearts. (3.) The unaccountable stupidity of the disciples, with reference to this prediction of Christ's sufferings. It was said in Mark, they understood not that saying, it was plain enough, but they would not understand it in the literal sense, because it agreed not with their notions, and they could not understand it in any other, and were afraid to ask him, lest they should be undeceived and awaked out of their pleasing dream; but it is here added, that it was hid from them, that they perceived it not, through the weakness of faith and the power of prejudice. We cannot think it was in mercy hid from them, lest they should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow at the prospect of it; but that it was a paradox, because they made it so to themselves.

3. The rebuke Christ gave to his disciples for their disputing among themselves which should be greatest, ver. 46—48. This passage we had before, and, the more is the pity, shall meet with the like again. Observe here,

(1.) That ambition of honour, and strife for superiority and precedency, is a sin that doth most easily beset the disciples of our Lord Jesus, for which they deserve to be severely rebuked; and it flows from corruptions, which they are highly concerned to subdue and mortify, ver. 46. They that expect to be great in this world, commonly aim high, and nothing will serve them short of being greatest; which exposeth them to a great deal of temptation and trouble, which they are safe from that are content to be little, to be least, to be less than the least.

2. That Jesus Christ is perfectly acquainted with the thoughts and intents of our hearts; ver. 47. he perceived their thoughts; they are *words* to him, and *whispered* loud cries. It is a good reason why we should keep up a strict government of our thoughts, because Christ takes a strict cognizance of them.

(3.) That Christ will have his disciples to aim at that honour that is to be obtained by a quiet and condescending humility, and not at that which is to be obtained by a restless and aspiring ambition. Christ took a child, and set him on him, ver. 47. he always expressed a tenderness and kindness for little children; and he proposed *this child* to them for an example; (1.) Let them be of the *temper* of this child, *humble and quiet*, and easy to itself; let them not affect worldly pomp or grandeur or high titles, but be as dead to them as this child; let them bear no more malice to their rivals and competitors than this child did. Let them be willing to be *the least*, if that would contribute any thing to their usefulness, to stoop to the meanest office whereby they might *do good*. (2.) Let them assure themselves that this was the way to preferment; for this would recommend them to the esteem of their brethren: they that loved Christ, would therefore receive them *in his name*, because they did most resemble him; and they would likewise recommend themselves to his favour, for Christ would take the kindnesses done to them as done to himself. *Whoever shall receive one such child*, a preacher of the gospel that is of such a disposition as this, he placeth his respects aright, and *receiveth me*; and *whoever receiveth me* in such a minister, *receiveth him that sent me*: and what greater honour can any man attain to in this world, than to be received by men as a messenger of God and Christ, and to have God and Christ own themselves received and welcomed in him; this honour have all the humble disciples of Jesus Christ, and thus they shall be truly great that are left among them.

4. The rebuke Christ gave to his disciples for discouraging one that honoured him and served him, but was not of their communion, not only not one of the twelve, or one of the seventy, but not one of those that ever associated with them or attended on them, but upon occasional hearing of Christ believed in him, and made use of his name with faith and prayer in a serious manner, for the casting out of devils. Now, (1.) This man they rebuked and restrained; they would not let him pray and preach, though it was to the honour of Christ, though it did good to men and weakened Satan's kingdom, because he did *not follow Christ with them*; he separated from their church, was not ordained as they were, paid them no respect, nor gave them the right hand of fellowship. Now if ever any society of Christians in this world had reason to silence those that were not of their communion, the twelve disciples at this time had; and yet, (2.) Jesus Christ chid them for what they did, and warned them not to do the like again, nor any that profess to be the successors of the apostles; *Forbid him not*, ver. 30. but rather encourage him, for he is carrying on the same design that you are, though for reasons best known to himself he doth not accompany you in the same way. You do well to do as you do, but it doth not therefore follow that he doth ill to do as he doth, and that you do well to put him under an interdict, for *he that is not against us, is for us*, and therefore ought to be countenanced by us. We need not lose any of our friends, while we have so few, and so many enemies. Those may be found faithful followers of Christ, and as such may be accepted of him, though they do not follow *with us*, See Mark ix. 38, 39. O what a great deal of mischief to the church, even from those that boast of relation to Christ, and pretend to *envy for his sake*, would be prevented, if this passage of story were but well considered!

51. ¶ And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. 52. And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. 53. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. 54. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? 55. But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. 56. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.

This passage of story we have not in any other of the evangelists, and it seems to come in here for the sake of its affinity with that next before, for in this also Christ rebuked his disciples, because they envied for his sake; there under colour of zeal for Christ, they were silencing and restraining separatists, here under the same colour they were for putting infidels to death, and as for that, so for this also, Christ reprimanded them; for a spirit of bigotry and persecution is directly contrary to the spirit of Christ and Christianity.

Observe here.

1. The *readiness* and *resolution* of our Lord Jesus, in prosecuting his great undertaking for our redemption and salvation. Of this we have an instance, ver. 51. *When the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem*. Observe, (1.) There was a time fixed for the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus, and he knew well enough when it was, and had a clear and certain foresight of it, and yet was so far from keeping out of the way that then he appeared most publicly of all, and was most busy, knowing that his time was short. (2.) When he saw his death and sufferings approaching, he looked through them, and beyond them, to the glory that should follow; he looked upon it as the time when he should be *received up into glory*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. received up into the highest heavens to be enthroned there. Moses and Elias spoke of his death at his departure out of this world, which made it not *formidable*; but he went further, and looked upon it as his translation to a better world, which made it very *desirable*. All good Christians may frame to themselves the same notion of death, and may call it their being *received up*, to be with Christ where he is; and when the time of their being *received up* is at hand, let them lift up their heads, knowing that *their redemption draws nigh*. (3.) On this prospect of the joy set before him, he *stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem*, the place where he was to suffer and die. He was fully determined to go, and would not be dissuaded; he went *directly* to Jerusalem, because there now his business lay, and he did not go about to other towns, or fetch a compass, which if had done, as commonly he did, he might have avoided going through Samaria. He went cheerfully and courageously thither, though he knew the things which should befall him there. He did

not fail nor was discouraged, but set his face as a flint, knowing that he should be not only justified but glorified, Isa. l. 7. not only not *damned*, but *received up*. How should this shame us for, and shame us out of our backwardness to do and suffer for Christ; we draw back, and turn our faces another way from his service, who stedfastly set his face against all opposition, to go through the work of our salvation.

2. The *rudeness* of the Samaritans in a *certain village*, not named nor deserving to be so, who would not receive him, nor suffer him to bait in their town, though his way lay through it. Observe here, (1.) How *civil* he was to them. He sent messengers before his face, some of his disciples, that went to take up lodgings, and to know whether he might have leave to accommodate himself and his company among them; for he would not come to give offense; or if they took any umbrage at the number of his followers. He sent some to make ready for him, not for state, but convenience, and that his coming might be no surprise. (2.) How *uncivil* they were to him, ver. 53. they did not receive him, would not suffer him to come into their village, but ordered their watch to keep him out: He would have paid for all he bespoke, and been a generous guest among them, would have done them good, and preached the gospel to them as he had done some time ago to another city of the Samaritans, John iv. 41. He would have been, if they pleased, the greatest blessing that ever came to their village, and yet they forbade him entrance. Such treatment his gospel and ministers have often met with. Now the reason was *because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem*; they observed by his motions, that he was steering his course that way. The great controversy between the Jews and the Samaritans was about the place of worship, whether Jerusalem or mount Gerizim near Sychar; see John iv. 20. And so hot was the controversy between them, that the Jews would have no dealings with the Samaritans, nor they with them, John iv. 9. Yet we may suppose they did not deny other Jews lodging among them, no not when they went up to the feasts, for if that had been their constant practice, Christ would not have attempted it; and it would have been a great way about, for some of the Galileans to go to Jerusalem any other way but through Samaria. But they were particularly incensed against Christ, who was a celebrated teacher, for owning and adhering to the temple at Jerusalem, when the priests of that temple were such bitter enemies to him, which they hoped would have driven him to come and worship at their temple, and bring that into reputation; but when they saw he would go forward to Jerusalem, notwithstanding this, they would not shew him the common civility, which probably they used formerly to shew him, in his journey thither.

3. The *resentment* which James and John had of this affront, ver. 54. When the two heard this message brought, they were all in a flame presently, and nothing will serve them but Sodom's doom upon this village; Lord, say they, give us leave to command fire to come down from heaven, not to frighten them only, but to consume them. Here indeed they shewed, (1.) A great confidence in the power they had received from Jesus Christ; though this had not been particularly mentioned in their commission, yet they could with a word speaking fetch fire from heaven *ὅς τις εἰπῶν αὐτοῖς*, wilt thou that we speak the word, and the thing will be done. (2.) A great zeal for the honour of their Master; they took it very heinously, that he who did good wherever he came, and found hearty welcome, should be denied the liberty of the road by a parcel of paltry Samaritans; they could not think of it without indignation, that their Master should be thus slighted. (3.) A submission notwithstanding to their Master's good will and pleasure; they will not offer to do such a thing, unless Christ give leave; *Wilt thou that we do it*; (4.) A regard to the examples of the prophets that were before them; it is doing as Elias did: they would not have thought of such a thing, if Elias had not done it upon the soldiers that came to take him, once and again, 2 Kings i. 10—12. They thought this precedent would be their warrant: so apt are we to misapply the examples of good men, and to think to justify ourselves by them in the irregular liberties we give ourselves, when the case is not parallel.

But though there was something well in what they said, yet there was much more amiss. (1.) This was not the first time, by a great many, that our Lord Jesus had been in like manner affronted, witness the Nazarenes thrusting him out of their city, and the Gadarenes desiring him to depart out of their coast, and yet he never called for any judgment upon them, but patiently put up with the injury. (2.) These were Samaritans, from whom better was not to be expected, and perhaps they had heard that Christ had forbidden his disciples to enter into any of the cities of the Samaritans, Matt. x. 5. and therefore it was not so bad in them as in others, that knew more of Christ, and had received so many favours from him. (3.) Perhaps it was only some few of the town that knew any thing of the matter, or that sent that rude message to him, while, for ought they knew, there were many in the town, who, if they had heard of Christ's being so near them, would have gone to meet him, and welcome him; and must the whole town be laid in ashes for the wickedness of a few? Will they have the righteous destroyed with the wicked? (4.) Their Master had never yet upon any occasion called for fire from heaven, nay, he had refused to give the Pharisees any sign from heaven, when they demanded it, Matt. xvi. 1, 2. and why should they think to introduce it? James and John were the two disciples whom Christ had called Boanerges, sons of thunder, Mark iii. 17. and will not that serve them, but they must be sons of lightning too? (5.) The example of Elias did not reach the case. Elias was sent to display the terrors of the law, and to give proof of that, and to witness as a bold reprovener against the idolatries and wickedness of the court of Ahab, and it was agreeable enough to him to have his commission thus proved, but it is a dispensation of grace that is now to be introduced, to which such a terrible display of divine justice will not at all be agreeable. Archbishop Tillotson suggests, that their being now near Samaria, where Elias called for fire from heaven, that might help to put it in their heads; perhaps at the very place; but though the place was the same the times were altered.

4. The *reproof* he gave to James and John for their fiery, furious zeal, ver. 55. He turned with a just displeasure, and rebuked them, for as many as he loves he rebukes and chastens, particularly for what they do that is irregular and unbecoming them, under colour of zeal for him.

1. He shews them in particular their mistake. *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of*; that is, (1.) Ye are not aware what an evil spirit and disposition you are of; how much there is of pride and passion, and personal revenge covered under this pretence of zeal for your Master. Note, There may be much corruption lurking, nay, and stirring too, in the hearts of good people, and they themselves not be sensible of it. (2.) Ye do not consider what a good spirit, directly contrary to this, ye should be of. Surely you are yet to learn, though you have been so long learning, what the spirit of Christ and Christianity is: Have you not been taught to love your enemies, and to bless them that curse you, and to call for grace from heaven, not fire from heaven, upon them? You know not how contrary your disposition herein is, to that which it was the design of the gospel you should be delivered into. You are not now under the dispensation of bondage and terror, and death, but under the dispensation of love, and liberty, and grace, which was ushered in with a proclamation of peace on earth, and good will

will towards men, to which you ought to accommodate yourselves, and not by such imprecations as these oppose yourselves.

2. He shows them the general design and tendency of his religion, *ver. 56.* *The son of man is now himself come, and therefore doth not send you abroad, to destroy men's lives, but to save them.* He did not to propagate his holy religion by love and sweetness, and every thing that is inviting and endearing, not by fire and sword, and blood and slaughter; by miracles of healing, not by plagues and miracles of destruction, as Israel was brought out of Egypt. Christ came to *slay all unities*, not to foster them. Those are certainly destitute of the spirit of the gospel, that are for anathematizing and rooting out by violence and persecution all that are not of their mind and way, that cannot in conscience say as they say, and do as they do. Christ came not only to save men's souls, but to save their lives too, witness the many miracles he wrought for the healing of diseases that would otherwise have been mortal. By which, and a thousand other instances of beneficence, it appears that Christ would have his disciples do good to all to the utmost of their power, but hurt to none; to draw men into his church with the *cards of man, and the hands of love*, but not to think to drive men into it with a *rod of violence*, or the *scourge of the tongue*.

5. His retreat from this village. Christ would not only not punish them for their rudeness, but would not insist upon his right of travelling the road, which was as free to him as to other his neighbours, would not attempt to force his way, but quietly and peaceably went to another village, where they were not so stingy and bigotted, and there refreshed himself and went on his way. Note, When a stream of opposition is strong, it is wisdom to get out of the way of it, rather than to contend with it. If some be very rude, instead of revenging it, we should try whether others will not be more civil.

57. ¶ And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. 58. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. 59. And he said unto another, Follow me, But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. 60. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury the dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. 61. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. 62. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

We have here an account of three several persons that offered themselves to follow Christ, and the answers that Christ gave to each of them: The two former we had an account of, *Matt. xix. 21.*

First, Here is one that is extremely forward to follow Christ immediately, but seems to have been too rash and hasty and inconsiderate, and not to have sitten down, and counted the cost.

1. He makes Christ a very large promise, *ver. 57.* *As they went in the way, going up to Jerusalem, where it was expected Christ would first appear in his glory, one said to him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest;* this must be the resolution of all that will be found Christ's disciples indeed; they follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes, *Rev. xiv. 4.* though it be through fire and water to prisons and death.

2. Christ gives him a necessary caution not to promise himself great things in the world in following him; but on the contrary, to count upon poverty and meanness, for the Son of man has not where to lay his head.

We may look upon this, (1.) As setting forth the low condition that our Lord Jesus was in in this world. He not only wanted the delights and ornaments that great princes used to have, but even such accommodations for mere necessity as the foxes have, and the birds of the air. See what a depth of poverty our Lord Jesus submitted to for us, to increase the worth and merit of his satisfaction, and to purchase for us a larger allowance of grace, that we through his poverty might be rich, *2 Cor. viii. 9.* He that made all, did not make a dwelling-place for himself, not a house of his own to put his head in, but what he was beholden to others for. He here calls himself the Son of man, a son of Adam, partaker of flesh and blood. He glories in his condescension towards us, not only the meanness of our nature, but to the meanest condition in that nature, to testify his love to us, and to teach us a holy contempt of the world and of the great things in it; and a continual regard to another world. Christ was thus poor to sanctify and sweeten poverty to his people; the apostles had no certain dwelling-place, *1 Cor. iv. 11.* Which they might the better bear, when they knew their Master had not, alluding to *2 Sam. xi. 11.* We may well be content to fare as Christ did. (2.) As proposing this to the consideration of those who intend to be his disciples. If we mean to follow Christ, we must lay aside the thoughts of great things in the world, and not reckon upon making any thing more than heaven of our religion, as we must resolve not to take up with any thing less. Let us not go about to compound the profession of Christianity with secular advantages; Christ has put them asunder, let us not think of joining them together; on the contrary, we must expect to enter into the kingdom of heaven through many tribulations, *must deny ourselves and take up our cross.* Christ tells this man what he must count upon if he followed him, to lie cold and uneasy, to fare hard, and live in contempt; if he could not submit to that, let him not pretend to follow Christ. This word sent him back for aught appears; but it will be no discouragement to any, that know what there is in Christ and heaven to set in the scale against this.

Secondly, Here is another that seems resolved to follow Christ, but he begs a day, *ver. 59.* To this man Christ first gave the call, he said to him, follow me. He that proposed the thing of himself, fled off when he heard of the difficulties that attended it; but this man to whom Christ gave a call, though he hesitated at first, yet, as it should seem, afterwards yielded; so true was that of Christ, *you have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,* *John xv. 16.* It is not of him that willeth, and of him that runneth, as that forward spark in the foregoing verses, but of God that streweth mercy, that gives the call, and makes it effectual, as to this man here. Observe,

1. The excuse he made; *Lord, suffer me to go and bury my father.* I have an aged father at home who cannot live long, and will need me while he doth live; let me go and attend on him until he is dead, and I have performed my last office of love to him, and then I will do any thing. We may here see three temptations, by which we are in danger of being drawn and kept from following Christ; which therefore we should guard against. (1.) We are tempted to rest in a discipleship at large, in which we may be at a loose end, and not to come close, and give up ourselves to be strict and constant. (2.) We are tempted to defer the doing of that which we know to

be our duty, and to put it off to some other time. When we have got clear of such a care and difficulty, when we have dispatched such a business, raised an estate to such a pitch, then we will begin to think of being religious; and so we are cozened of all our time, by being cozened of the present time. (3.) We are tempted to think that our duty to our relations will excuse us from our duty to Christ; it is a plausible excuse indeed, let me go bury my father, let me take care of my family, and provide for my children, and then I will think of serving Christ; whereas the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof, must be sought and minded in the first place.

2. Christ's answer to it, *ver. 60.* *Let the dead bury their dead.* Suppose, (which is not likely) that there were none but the dead to bury their dead, or none but those that are themselves aged and dying, who are as good as dead, and fit for no other service, yet thou hast other work to do: Go thou and preach the kingdom of God. Not that Christ would have his followers or his ministers to be unmarried, our religion teacheth us to be kind and good in every relation, to show piety at home, and to requite our parents: But we must not make these offices an excuse from our duty to God. If the nearest and dearest relation we have in the world stand in our way to keep us from Christ, it is necessary we have a zeal that will make us forget father and mother, as Levi did, *Deut. xxxiii. 9.* This disciple was called to be a minister, and therefore must not intangle himself with the affairs of this world, *1 Tim. ii. 4.* And it is a rule, That whenever Christ calls to any duty, we must not consult with flesh and blood, *Gal. i. 15, 16.* No excuses must be admitted against a present obedience to the call of Christ.

Thirdly, Here is another that is willing to follow Christ, but he must have a little time to talk with his friends about it.

Observe,

1. His request for a dispensation, *ver. 61.* He said, *Lord, I will follow thee, I design no other, I am determined to do it, but let me first go bid them farewell that are at home.* This seemed reasonable, it was what Eliza desired when Elijah called him, *Let me kiss my father and my mother;* and it was allowed him: But the ministry of the gospel is preferable, and the service of it more urgent than that of the prophets, and therefore here it would not be allowed. *Συμμενομεν ομοθυμαδον τοις υιοις του οικου σου, let me go and bid them farewell, and give direction concerning them:* So some understand it. Now that which was amiss in this is, (1.) That he looked upon his following Christ as a melancholy, troublesome, dangerous thing, it was to him as if he were going to die; and therefore he must take leave of all his friends, never to see them again, or never with any comfort; whereas, in following Christ, he might be more a comfort and blessing to them, than if he had continued with them. (2.) That he seemed to have his worldly concerns more upon his heart than he ought to have, and than would consist with a close attendance to his duty as a follower of Christ. He seemed to hanker after his relations and family concerns, and he could not part easily and cleverly from them, but they stuck to him. It may be he had bidden them farewell once, but loth to part, bid oft farewell, and therefore he must bid them farewell once more, for they are at home at my house. (6.) That he was willing to enter into a temptation from his purpose of following Christ. To go bid them farewell that were at home at his house, would be to expose himself to the strongest solicitations imaginable to alter his resolution, for they would all be against it, and would beg and pray that he would not leave them; now it was presumption in him to thrust himself into such a temptation. Those that resolve to walk with their Maker, and to follow their Redeemer, must resolve that they will not so much as parley with their tempter.

2. The rebuke which Christ gave him for his request, *ver. 62.* *No man having put his hand to the plough, and designing to make good work of his ploughing, will look back or look behind him, for then he makes balks with his plough, and the ground he ploughs is not fit to be sown;* so thou, if thou hast designed to follow me, and to reap the advantages of those that do so, if thou lookest back to a worldly life again, and hankerest after that; if thou lookest back as Lot's wife did to Sodom, which seems to be alluded to here *thou art not fit for the kingdom of God.* (1.) Thou art not fit to receive the good seed of the kingdom of God, if thou art thus ploughed by the halves and not gone through with. (2.) Thou art not a fitter fit to scatter the good seed to the kingdom, if thou canst hold the plough no better. Ploughing is in order to sowing. As those are not fit to be sown with divine comforts whose fallow ground is not first broken up, so those are not fit to be employed in sowing that know not how to break up the fallow ground; but when they have laid their hand to the plough, upon every occasion look back and think of quitting it. Note, Those who begin with the work of God, must resolve to go on with it, or they will make nothing of it. Looking back inclines to drawing back, and drawing back is to perdition. Those are not fit for heaven, who having set their faces heavenward, face about. But he, and he only that endures to the end shall be saved.

C H A P. X.

In this chapter we have, (1.) The ample commission which Christ gave to the seventy disciples to preach the gospel, and to confirm it by miracles; and the full instructions he gave them, how to manage themselves in the execution of their commissions, and great encouragement therein, *ver. 1—16.* (2.) The reports which the seventy disciples made to their Master of the success of their negotiation, and his discourse thereupon, *ver. 17—21.* (3.) Christ's discourse with a lawyer concerning the way to heaven, and the instructions Christ gave him by a parable to look upon every one as his neighbour, whom he had occasion to show kindness to or receive kindness from, *ver. 25—37.* (4.) Christ's entertainment at Martha's house, the reproof he gave to her for her care about the world, and his commendation of Mary for her care about her soul, *ver. 38—42.*

1. AFTER these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. 2. Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. 3. Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. 4. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way. 5. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. 6. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. 7. And in the same house

house remain eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. 8. And into whatever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: 9. And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. 10. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, 11. Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. 12. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. 13. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you. 15. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell. 16. He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

We have here the sending forth of seventy disciples two and two into divers parts of the country to preach the gospel and to work miracles in those places which Christ himself designed to visit, to make way for his entertainment. This is not taken notice of by the other evangelists; but the instructions here given them, are much the same with those given to the twelve. Observe,

1. Their number: They were seventy. As in the choice of twelve apostles, Christ had an eye to the twelve patriarchs, the twelve tribes, and the twelve princes of those tribes, so here he seems to have an eye to the seventy elders of Israel. So many went up with Moses and Aaron to the mount, and saw the glory of the God of Israel, Exod. xxiv. 1—9. And so many were afterwards chosen to be assisting to Moses in the government, in order to which, the Spirit of prophecy came upon them, Num. xi. 24, 25. The twelve wells of water, and the seventy palm trees that were at Elion, were a figure of the twelve apostles, and the seventy disciples, Exod. xv. 27. They were seventy elders of the Jews that were employed by Ptolemy king of Egypt, in turning the Old Testament into Greek, whose translation is thence called the Septuagint. The great Sanhedrin consisted of this number. Now,

(1.) We are glad to find that Christ had so many followers fit to be sent forth; his labour was not altogether in vain, though he met with much opposition. Note, Christ's interest is a growing interest, and his followers, like Israel in Egypt, though afflicted, shall multiply. These seventy, though they did not attend him so closely and constantly as the twelve did, yet they were the constant hearers of his doctrine, and witnesses of his miracles, and believed in him. Those three mentioned in the close of the foregoing chapter, might have been of these seventy, if they would have applied themselves in good earnest to their business. These seven y were those whom Peter speaks of, as the men which accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, and were part of the one hundred and twenty there spoken of, Acts i. 15—21. Many of those that were the companions of the apostles, whom we read of in the Acts and the Epistles, we may suppose were of these seventy disciples.

(2.) We are glad to find there was work for so many ministers; hearers for so many preachers: Thus the grain of mustard-seed began to grow, and the favour of the heaven to diffuse itself in the meal, in order to the leavening of the whole.

2. Their work and business. He sent them two and two, that they might strengthen and encourage one another: If one fall, the other will help to raise him up. He sent them, not to all the cities of Israel as he did the twelve, but only to every city and place whither he himself would come, ver. 1. as his harbingers; and we must suppose, though it be not recorded, that Christ did soon after come to all those places whither he now sent them, though he could stay but a little while in a place. Two things they were ordered to do, the same that Christ did wherever he came. (1.) They must heal the sick, ver. 9. heal them in the name of Jesus, which would make people to long to see that Jesus, and ready to entertain him whose name was so powerful. (2.) They must publish the approach of the kingdom of God, its approach to them; tell them this, The kingdom of God is come nigh to you, and you now stand fair for an admission into it, if you will but look about you. Now is the day of your visitation, know and understand it. It is good to be made sensible of our advantages and opportunities that we may lay hold on them. When the kingdom of God comes nigh us, it concerns us to go forth to meet it.

3. The instructions he gives them.

1. They must set out with prayer, ver. 2. and in prayer. (1.) They must be duly affected with the necessities of the souls of men which called for their help. They must look about and see how great the harvest was, what abundance of people there were that wanted to have the gospel preached to them, and were willing to receive it; nay, that had at this time their expectations raised of the coming of the Messiah and of his kingdom. There was corn ready to shed and be lost for want of hands to gather it in. Note, Ministers should apply themselves to their work under a deep concern for precious souls, looking upon them as the riches of this world, which ought to be secured for Christ. They must likewise be concerned that the labourers were so few. The Jewish teachers were indeed many, but they were not labourers; they did not gather in souls to God's kingdom, but to their own interest and party. Note, Those that are good ministers themselves, with there were more good ministers, for there is work for more. It is common for tradesmen not to care how few there are of their own trade; but Christ would have the labourers in his vineyard reckon it a matter of complaint when the labourers are few.

(2.) They must earnestly desire to receive their mission from God; that he would send them forth as labourers into his harvest, who is the Lord of the harvest; and that he would send others forth; for if God send them forth, they may hope he will go along with them and give them success. Let them therefore say, as the prophet Isa. vi. 1. Here I am, send me. It is desirable to receive our commission from God, and then we may go on boldly.

(2.) They must set out with an expectation of trouble and persecution. Behold I send you forth as lambs among wolves, but go your ways, and resolve to make the best of it. Your enemies will be as wolves, bloody and cruel, and ready to pull you to pieces; in their threatenings and revilings, they will be as howling wolves to terrify you, in their persecutions of you they will be as ravening wolves to tear you. But you must be as lambs, peaceable and patient, though made an easy prey of. It would have been very hard thus to be sent forth as sheep among wolves, if he had not endured them with his spirit and courage.

3. They must not encumber themselves with a load of provisions, as if they were going a long voyage, but depend upon God and their friends to provide what was convenient for them; carry neither a purse for money, nor a scrip or knapsack for clothes or victuals, nor new shoes, as before to the twelve, chap. ix. 3. and salute no man by the way: This command Elisha gave to his servant, when he sent him to fetch the Shunamite's dead child, 2 Kings iv. 29. Not that Christ would have his ministers to be rude and morose, and mis-mannered; but, (1.) They must go as men in haste that had their particular places assigned them, where they must deliver their message, and in their way directly to those places must not hinder or retard themselves with needless ceremonies or compliments. (2.) They must go as men of business, business that relates to another world, which they must be intent in, and intent upon, and therefore must not entangle themselves with conversation about secular affairs. Minister verbi est, hoc age. (3.) They must go as serious men, and men in sorrow; it was the custom of mourners, in the seven first days of their mourning not to salute any, Job ii. 13. Christ was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and it was fit that by this and other signs his messengers should resemble him, and likewise shew themselves affected with the calamities of mankind which they came to relieve, and touched with a feeling of them.

4. They must shew not only their good will, by God's good-will to all to whom they came, and leave the issue and success to him that knows the heart, ver. 5, 6.

1. The charge given them was, Whatsoever house they entered into, they must say, Peace be to this house. Here, (1.) They are supposed to enter into private houses, for being not admitted into the synagogues, they were forced to preach where they could have liberty. And as their public preaching was driven into houses, so thither they carried it: Like their Master, wheresoever they visited, they preached from house to house, Acts v. 42—xx. 20. Christ's church was at first very much a church in the house. (2.) They are instructed to say, Peace be to this house, to all under this roof, to this family, and to all that belong to it. Peace be to you, was the common form of salutation among the Jews, they must not use it in formality according to custom to those they meet on the way, because they must use it with solemnity, to those whose houses they entered into; salute no man by the way in compliment, but those into whose house ye enter, say to them, Peace be to you, with seriousness and in reality; for this is intended to be more than a compliment. Christ's ministers go into all the world, to say, in Christ's name, Peace be to you. (1.) We are to propose peace to all; to preach peace by Jesus Christ, to proclaim the gospel of peace, the covenant of peace, peace on earth, and to invite the children of men to come and take the benefit of it. (2.) We are to pray for peace to all. We must earnestly desire the salvation of the souls of those we preach to, and offer up those desires to God in prayer, and it may be well to let them know we do thus pray for them, and bless them in the name of the Lord.

2. The success was different according to the different dispositions of those they preached to and prayed for. According as the inhabitants are sons of peace or not, accordingly our peace will, or will not rest upon the house; recipitur ad modum recipientis. (1.) You will meet with some that are the sons of peace, that by the operations of the divine grace, pursuant to the designations of the divine counsel, are ready to admit the word of the gospel in the light and love of it, and have their hearts made as soft was to receive the impressions of it. Those are qualified to receive the comforts of the gospel, in whom there is a good work of grace wrought. And as to those, your peace shall find them out and rest upon them, your prayers for them shall be heard, the promises of the gospel shall be confirmed to them, the privileges of it conferred on them, and the fruit of both shall remain and continue with them; a good part shall not be taken away. (2.) You will meet with others that are no ways disposed to hear or heed your message; whose houses that have not one son of peace in them; now it is certain our peace shall not come upon them, they have no part or lot in the matter; the blessings that rest upon the sons of peace shall never come upon the sons of Belial, nor can any expect the blessings of the covenant that will not come under the bonds of it. But it shall return to us again, that is, we shall have the comfort of having done our duty to God, and discharged our trust. Our prayers, like David's, shall return into our bosom, Psalm xxxv. 13. and we shall have commission to go on in the work. Our peace shall return to us again, not only to be enjoyed by ourselves but to be communicated to others, to the next we meet with, them that are sons of peace.

3. They must receive the kindnesses of those that did entertain them and bid them welcome, ver. 7, 8. Those that receive the gospel will receive estates, but you may depend upon a subsistence; and, (1.) Be not shy; do not suspect your welcome, nor be afraid of being troublesome, but eat and drink heartily such things as they give; for whatever kindness they shew you, it is but a small return for the kindness you do them in bringing the glad tidings of peace. You will deserve it, for the labourer is worthy of his hire, the labourer in the work of the ministry is so, if he be indeed a labourer; and it is not an act of charity but of justice, in them who are taught in the word to communicate to them that teach them. (2.) Be not nice and curious in your diet, eat and drink such things as they give, ver. 7. such things as are set before you, ver. 8. Be thankful for plain food, and do not find fault, though it be not dressed according to art. It becomes Christ's disciples to be devoid of dainties. As he has not tied them up to the Pharisees' superstitious fads, so he has not allowed them the luxurious feast of the Epicures. Probably, Christ here refers to the traditions of the elders about their meat, which were so many, that those who observed them were extremely critical; you could hardly set a dish of meat before them, but there was some scruple or other concerning it; but Christ would not have them to regard those things, but eat what was given them, asking no question for conscience sake.

4. They must denounce the judgment of God against those who rejected them and their message. If you enter into a city, and they do not receive you, if there be none there disposed to hearken to your doctrine, leave them, ver. 10. If they will not give you welcome into their houses, do you give them warning in their streets; he orders them to do, as, chap. ix. 5. he had ordered the apostles to do, say to them, not with rage, or scorn, or resentment but with compassion to their poor perishing souls, and a holy dread of their ruin which they are bringing upon themselves, even the dust of your city which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you, ver. 11. from them do not receive any kindnesses at all, be not beholden to them; it cost that prophet of the Lord dear, who accepted a meal's meat with a prophet in Bethel, 1 Kings xiii. 21, 22. Tell them you will not carry away with you the dust of their city,

city, let them take it to themselves, for *dust they are*. It shall be a witness for Christ's messengers, that they had been there according to their Master's order; *tender and refusal* was a discharge of their trust: But it shall be a witness against the recusants, that they would not give Christ's messengers any entertainment, no not so much as water to wash their feet with, but they were forced to wipe off the dust. But tell them plainly, and bid them be sure of it, *The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you*. Here is a fair offer made you, if you have not the benefit of it, it is your own fault. The gospel is brought to your doors, if you shut your doors against it, your blood is upon your own head. Now the *kingdom of God is come nigh unto you*, if you will not come up to it, and come into it, your sin will be inexcusable, and your condemnation intolerable. Note the fairer offers we have of grace and life by Christ, the more we shall have to answer for another day, if we slight these offers. *It shall be more tolerable for Sodom than for that city*, ver. 12. The Sodomites indeed rejected the warning given them by Lot, but rejecting the gospel is a more heinous crime, and will be punished accordingly *in that day*; he means the day of judgment, ver. 14. but calls it by way of emphasis *that day*, because it is the last and great day, the day when we must account for all the *days of time*, and have our state determined for the *days of eternity*.

Upon this occasion the evangelist repeats,

1. The particular doom of those cities wherein most of Christ's mighty works were done, which we had, *Matt. xi. 21, &c.* Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum, all bordering upon the sea of Galilee, where Christ was most conversant, are the places here mentioned. (1.) They enjoyed greater privileges; Christ's *mighty works were done in them*, and they were all gracious works, works of mercy. They were hereby *exalted to heaven*, not only dignified and honoured, but put into a fair way of being happy; they were brought as near heaven as external means could bring them. (2.) God's design in favouring them thus, was to bring them to *repentance and reformation of life*; to *fit in sackcloth and ashes*, both in humiliation for the sins they had committed, and in humility, a meek subjection to God's government. (3.) Their frustrating this design, and their receiving the grace of God therein in vain; it is implied, that they *repented not*, they were not wrought upon by all the miracles of Christ, to think the better of him, or the worse of sin. They did not bring forth fruits agreeable to the advantages they enjoyed. (4.) There was reason to think, morally speaking, that if Christ had gone to Tyre and Sidon, Gentile cities, and had preached the same doctrine to them, and wrought the same miracles among them that he did in these cities of Israel, they would have repented *long ago*, so speedy would their repentance have been, and that in *sackcloth and ashes*, so deep would it have been. Now to understand the wisdom of God, in giving the means of grace to those who would not improve them, and denying them to those that would, we must wait for the great day of discovery. (5.) The doom of those who thus received the Grace of God in vain, will be very fearful; they that were *thus exalted*, not making use of their elevation, will be *thrust down to hell*; thrust down with disgrace and dishonour; they will thrust in to get into heaven, in the crowd of professors, but in vain, they shall be *thrust down* to their everlasting grief and disappointment, into the lowest hell, and hell will be hell indeed to them. (6.) In the day of judgment Tyre and Sidon will fare better, and it will be more tolerable for them than for these cities.

2. The general rule which Christ would go by, as to those to whom he sent his ministers; he will reckon himself treated according as they treated his ministers, ver. 16. What is done to the ambassador, is done as it were to the prince that sends him. (1.) *He that heareth you, and regardeth what you say, heareth me*, and therein doth me honour. But, (2.) *He that despiseth you, doth in effect despise me*, and shall be reckoned with, as having put an affront upon me; nay, he *despiseeth him that sent me*. Note, Those that condemn the Christian religion, do in effect put a slight upon natural religion, which it is perfective of. And they who *despise* the faithful ministers of Christ, who, though they do not hate and persecute them, yet think meanly of them, look scornfully upon them, and turn their back upon their ministry, will be reckoned with as despisers of God and Christ.

17. ¶ And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, LORD, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. 18. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. 19. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you: but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. 21. ¶ In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, LORD of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. 22. All things are delivered to me of my Father; and who knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him. 23. ¶ And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: 24. For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them: and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

Christ sent forth the seventy disciples as he was going up to Jerusalem, to the *feast of tabernacles*, when he *went up not openly*, but *as it were in secret*, John vii. 10. having sent abroad so great a part of his ordinary retinue; and Dr. Lightfoot thinks it was before his return from that feast, and while he was yet at Jerusalem or Bethany, which was hard by, for there it was, ver. 38. that they, or at least some of them, returned to him. Now here we are told,

1. What account they gave him of the success of their expedition, ver. 17. They returned again with joy; not complaining of the fatigue of their journeys, or of the opposition and discouragement they met with, but rejoicing in their success, especially in casting out unclean spirits; *Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name*; though the *healing of the sick* only was mentioned in their commission, ver. 19. yet no doubt the *casting out of devils* was included, and in this they had wonderful success; (1.)

They gave Christ the glory of this: It is *through thy name*. Note, All our victories over Satan are obtained by power derived from Jesus Christ: We must *in his name* enter the lists with our spiritual enemies, and whatever advantages we gain, he must have all the praise; if the work be done *in his name*, the honour is due to *his name*. (2.) They entertain themselves with the comfort of it; they speak of it with an air of exultation, *even the devils* those potent enemies are *subject to us*. Note, The saints have no greater joy or satisfaction in any of their triumphs than in those over Satan. If devils are *subject to us*, what can stand before us?

2. What acceptance they found with him, and how he entertained this account.

1. He confirmed what they said, as agreeing with his own observation, ver. 18. My heart and eye went along with you; I took notice what success you had, and I *saw Satan fall as lightning from heaven*. Note, Satan and his kingdom fell before the preaching of the gospel; I see how it is, faith Christ, as you get ground the devil loseth ground: He falls as *lightning from heaven*, so suddenly, so irrecoverably, so visibly, that all may perceive it, and say, See how Satan's kingdom totters, see how it tumbles. They triumphed in the casting of devils out of the bodies of people; but Christ sees and rejoiceth in the fall of the devil, from the interest he has in the souls of men; which is called his power *in high places*, Eph. vi. 12. He foresees this to be but an earnest of what should now be shortly done and was already begun, the destroying of Satan's kingdom in the world, by the extirpating of idolatry, and the turning of the nations to the faith of Christ. Satan falls from heaven when he falls from the throne in men's hearts, *Acts xxvi. 18*. And Christ foresees that the preaching of the gospel, which would *fly like lightning* through the world, would, wherever it went, pull down Satan's kingdom. Now is the prince of this world cast out. Some have given another sense of this, as looking back to the fall of the angels, and designed for a caution to these disciples, lest their success should puff them up with pride. I saw angels turned into devils by *pride*, that was the sin for which Satan was cast down from heaven, where he had been an angel of light; I saw it, and give you an intimation of it, lest you, being *lifted up with pride*, should fall into that condemnation of the devil, who fell by pride, 1 Tim. iii. 6.

2. He repeated, ratified, and enlarged their commission, ver. 19. Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents. Note, To him that hath, and useth well what he hath, more shall be given. They had employed their power vigorously against Satan, and now Christ entrusts them with greater power. (1.) An *offensive* power, power to tread on serpents and scorpions, i. e. devils, malignant spirits, the old serpent; you shall bruise their heads in my name, according to the first promise, Gen. iii. 15. Come, set your feet on the necks of these enemies; you shall tread upon these lions and adders wherever you meet with them, you shall trample them under foot, Psalm xci. 13. You shall tread upon all the power of the enemy, and the kingdom of the Messiah shall be every where set up upon the ruins of the devil's kingdom; as the devils have now been *subject to you*, so they shall still be. (2.) A *defensive* power: *Nothing shall by any means hurt you*; not serpents or scorpions, if you should be chastised with them, or thrown into prisons and dungeons among them; you shall be unhurt by the most venomous creatures, as St. Paul was, *Acts xxviii. 5*. and as is promised, *Matt. xvi. 18*. If wicked men be as serpents to you, and you dwell among those scorpions, as Ezek. ii. 6. you may despise their rage, and tread upon it, it needs not disturb you, for they have no power against you but what is given them from above; they may hiss, but they cannot hurt. You may play upon the hole of the asp; for death itself shall not hurt or destroy, Isa. xi. 8—19—xxv. 8.

3. He directed them to turn their joy into the right channel, ver. 20. Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; that have been so, and shall be still so: Do not rejoice in this, only as it is your honour and a confirmation of your mission, and as it sets you a degree above other good people, do not rejoice in this only, or in this chiefly, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven, i. e. because you are chosen of God to eternal life, and are the children of God through faith. Christ, who knew the counsels of God, could tell them, that their names were written in heaven, for it is the *Lamb's book of life* that they are written in. All believers are through grace entitled to the inheritance of sons, and have received the adoption of sons, and the spirit of adoption, which is the earnest of that inheritance, and so are enrolled among his family; now this is matter of joy, greater joy than casting out devils. Note, Power to become the children of God, is to be valued more than a power to work miracles: For we read of those who did in *Christ's name cast out devils*, as Judas did, and yet will be disowned by Christ in the great day; but they whose names are written in heaven shall never perish, they are *Christ's sheep*, to whom he will give eternal life. Saving graces are more to be rejoiced in than spiritual gifts; holy love is a more excellent way than speaking with tongues.

4. He offered up a solemn thanksgiving to his Father, for employing such mean people as his disciples were, in such high and honourable services, ver. 21, 22. this we had before, *Matt. xi. 25, 26, 27*. only here it is prefixed, that in that hour Jesus rejoiced, it was fit particular notice should be taken of that hour, because there were so few such, for he was a man of sorrows; in that hour he saw Satan fall, and heard of the good success of his ministers, in that hour he rejoiced. Note, Nothing rejoiceth the heart of the Lord Jesus so much, as the progress of the gospel, and its getting ground of Satan, by the conversion of souls to Christ. Christ's joy was a solid substantial joy; an inward joy, he rejoiced in spirit; but his joy, like deep waters, made no noise; it was a joy that a stranger did not intermeddle with; before he applied himself to thank his Father, he stirred up himself to rejoice; for as *thankful praise* is the genuine language of holy joy, so holy joy is the root and spring of thankful praise. Two things he gives thanks for:

(1.) For what was revealed by the Father through the Son, ver. 21. I thank thee, O Father, LORD of heaven and earth. In all our adorations of God we must have an eye to him, both as the Maker of heaven and earth, and as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in him our Father. Now that which he gives thanks for is, (1.) That the counsels of God concerning man's reconciliation, to himself, were revealed to some of the children of men, who might be fit also to teach others, and it is God that by his Son hath spoken these things to us, and by his Spirit has revealed them in us; he hath revealed that which had been kept secret from the beginning of the world. (2.) That they were revealed to babes, to those that were of mean parts and capacities, whose extraction and education had nothing in it promising, who were but children in understanding, till God by his Spirit elevated their faculties, and furnished them with this knowledge, and an ability to communicate it. We have reason to thank God; not so much for the honour he has hereby put upon the babes, as for the honour he has hereby done himself in perfecting strength out of weakness. (3.) That at the same time when he revealed them unto babes, had hid them from the wise and prudent, the Gentile philosophers, the Jewish rabbins. He did not reveal the things of the gospel to them, nor employ them in preaching up his kingdom, thanks be to God that the apostles were not fetched from their schools: For, (1.) They would have been apt to mingle their notions with the doctrine

doctrine of Christ, which would have corrupted it, as afterwards it proved. For Christianity was much corrupted by the Platonist's philosophy in the first ages of it, and by the Peripatetic in its latter ages, and by the Judaizing teachers at the first planting of it. (2.) If rabbins and philosophers had been made apostles, the success of the gospel would have been ascribed to their learning and wit, and the force of their reasoning and eloquence, and therefore they must not be employed lest they should have taken too much to themselves, and others should have attributed too much to them; they were passed by for the same reason that Gideon's army was reduced, *The people are yet too many*, Judges vii. 4. Paul indeed was bred a scholar among the wise and prudent, but he became a *habe* when he became an apostle, and laid aside the *enticing words of man's wisdom*, forgot them all, and made neither their nor use of any other knowledge but that of *Christ and him crucified*, 1 Cor. ii. 2, 4. (4.) That God herein acted in it by way of sovereignty, *even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight*. If God gives his grace, and the knowledge of his Son, to some that are less likely, and doth not give it to others, who we would think better able to deliver it with advantage; this must satisfy, so it pleaseth of God, whose thoughts are infinitely above ours. He chooseth to entrust the dispensing of his gospel in the hands of those, who with a *divine energy* will give it the *setting on*, rather than in theirs, who with *human art* will give it the *setting off*.

(2.) For what was *secret* between the Father and the Son, ver. 22. (1.) The vast confidence that the Father puts in the Son. *All things are delivered to me of my Father*: All wisdom and knowledge; all power and authority; all that grace and comfort which is intended for the chosen remnant, it is all delivered into the hands of the Lord Jesus; in him all fulness must dwell, and from him it must be derived: He is the great trustee that manageth all the concerns of God's kingdom. (2.) The good understanding that there is between the Father and the Son, and their *natural consciousness*, such as no creature can be admitted to. *No man knows who the Son is*, nor what his mind is, but the Father, who possessed him in the beginnings of his ways, before his works of old, Prov. viii. 22. Nor who the Father is, and what his counsels are, but the Son who lay in his bosom from eternity, was by him as one brought up with him, and was daily in his delight, Prov. viii. 20. and he to whom the Son by the Spirit will reveal him. The gospel is the revelation of Jesus Christ, and to him we owe all the discoveries made us of the will of God for our salvation, and here he speaks of it as that which was a great pleasure to himself, and for which he was very thankful to his Father to be so intrusted.

5. He told his disciples how well it was for them, that they had these things revealed to them, ver. 23, 24. Having addressed himself to his Father, he turned him to his disciples, designing to make them sensible how much it was for their happiness, as well as for the glory and honour of God, that they knew the mysteries of the kingdom, and were employed to lead others into the knowledge of them; considering, (1.) What a step it is towards something better, though the bare knowledge of these things is not saving, yet it puts us in the way of salvation; *blest are the eyes which see the things which we see*. God therein blesteth them, and if it be not their own fault, it will be an eternal blessedness to them. (2.) What a step it is above those that went before them, even the greatest saints, and those that were most the favourites of heaven, *many prophets and righteous men*, so it is, Matt. xiii. 17. *Many prophets and kings*, so it is here, have desired to see and hear those things which you are daily and intimately conversant with, and have not seen and heard them. The honour and happiness of the New Testament saints, far exceeds that even of the prophets and kings of the Old Testament, though they also were highly favoured. The general ideas which the Old Testament saints had, according to the intimations given them, of the graces and glories of the Messiah's kingdom, made them wish a thousand times that their lot had been reserved for those blessed days, and that they might see the substance of those things which they had faint shadows of. Note, The consideration of the great advantages which we have in the New Testament light, above what they had who lived in Old Testament times, should awaken our diligence in the improvement of it; for if it do not, it will aggravate our condemnation for the non-improvement of it.

25. ¶ And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? 26. He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? 27. And he answering, said, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. 28. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. 29. But he willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? 30. And Jesus answering, said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. 33. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him. 34. And went to him; and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. 36. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? 37. And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

We have here Christ's discourse with a lawyer about some points of conscience, which we are all concerned to be rightly informed in, and are so here from Christ, though the questions were proposed with no good intention.

First, We are concerned to know what that good is which we should do

in this life in order to our attaining eternal life. A question to this purpose was proposed to our Saviour by a certain lawyer or scribe, only with a design to try him; not with a design to be instructed by him, ver. 25. The lawyer stood up, and asked him, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? If Christ had any thing peculiar to prescribe, by this question he would get it out of him, and perhaps expose him for it; if not, he would expose his doctrine as needless, since it would give no other direction for obtaining happiness than what they had already received; or, perhaps he had no malicious design against Christ, as some of the scribes had, only he was willing to have a little talk with him, just as people go to church to hear what the minister will say. This was a good question, *What shall I do to inherit eternal life?* But it lost all its goodness when it was proposed with an ill design, or a very mean one. Note, It is not enough to speak of the things of God, and to enquire about them, but we must do it with an agreeable concern. If we speak of eternal life, and the way to it in a careless manner, merely as matter of discourse, especially as matter of dispute, we do but take the name of God in vain, as the lawyer here did.

Now this question being started, observe,

1. How Christ turned him over to the divine law, and bid him follow the direction of that. Though he knew the thoughts and intents of his heart, he doth not answer him according to the folly of that, but according to the wisdom and goodness of the question he asked. He answered him with a question, *What is written in the law, how readest thou?* ver. 26. He came to catechise Christ, and to know him, but Christ will catechise him, and make him know himself. He talks to him as a lawyer, as one conversant in the law, the studies of his profession would inform him; let him practise according to his knowledge, and he should not come short of eternal life. Note, It will be of great use to us in our way to heaven, to consider what is written in the law, and what we read there. We must have recourse to our Bibles, to the law, as it is now in the hand of Christ, and walk in the way that is shewed us there. It is a great mercy that we have the law written, that we have it thereby reduced to certainty, and that thereby it is capable of spreading the further, and lasting the longer. Having it written, it is our duty to read it, and to read it with understanding, to treasure up what we read, so that when there is occasion we may be able to tell what is written in the law, and how we read. And to this we must appeal, by this we must try doctrines and end disputes; this must be our oracle, our touchstone, or rule, our guide, what is written in the law, how we do read? If there be light in us, it will have regard to this light.

2. What a good account he gave of the law, of the principal commandments of the law, which we must bind ourselves to the observance of, if we would inherit eternal life. He did not, like a Pharisee, refer himself to the tradition of the elders, but like a good textuary fastened upon the two first and greatest commandments of the law, as those which he thought would be most strictly observed in order to the obtaining eternal life, and which included all the rest, ver. 27. (1.) We must love God with all our hearts, must look upon him as the best of beings in himself, most amiable, and infinitely perfect and excellent, as one whom we lie under the greatest obligation to, born in gratitude and interest. We must prize him and value ourselves by our relation to him; must please ourselves in him and devote ourselves entirely to him. Our love to him must be sincere and hearty and fervent; it must be a superlative love, a love that is as strong as death, but an intelligent love, and such as we can give a good account of the grounds and reasons of. It must be an entire love, he must have our whole souls, and must be served with all that is within us. We must love nothing beside him, but what we love for him, and in subordination to him. (2.) We must love our neighbours as ourselves, which we shall easily do, if we, as we ought to do, love God better than ourselves. We must wish well to all, and ill to none; must do all the good we can in the world, and no hurt, and must fix it as a rule to ourselves, to do to others as we would they should do to us; and this is to love our neighbour as ourselves.

3. Christ's approbation of what he said, ver. 28. Though he came to tempt him, yet what he said that was good, Christ commended; *thou hast answered right*. Christ himself fastened upon those as the two great commandments of the law, Matt. xxii. 37. both sides agree in this. Those who do well shall have praise of the same, and so should those have that speak well; so far is right; but the hardest part of this work yet remains, *this do, and thou shalt live*; thou shalt inherit eternal life.

His care to avoid the conviction which was now ready to fasten upon him. When Christ said, *This do, and thou shalt live*, he began to be aware that Christ intended to draw from him an acknowledgment that he had not done this, and therefore an enquiry what he should do, and which way he should look to get his sins pardoned; and likewise an acknowledgment that he could not do this perfectly for the future by any strength of his own, and therefore an enquiry which way he might fetch in strength to enable him to do it; but he was willing to justify himself, and therefore cared not for carrying on that discourse, but saith in effect as another did, Matt. xix. 20. *All these things have I kept from my youth up*. Note, Many ask good questions, with a design rather to justify themselves, than to inform themselves; rather proudly to shew what is good in them, than humbly to see what is bad in them.

Secondly, We are concerned to know who is our neighbour; whom by the second great commandment we are obliged to love. And this is another of the lawyer's queries which he started only that he might drop the former, lest Christ should have forced him in the prosecution of it to condemn himself, when he was resolved to justify himself. As to loving God, he was willing to say no more of it, but as to his neighbour, he was sure there he had come up to the rule; for he had always been very kind and respectful to all about him. Now observe,

1. What was the corrupt notion of the Jewish teachers in this matter; Dr. Lightfoot quotes their own words to this purpose, where he saith, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour, he excepts all Gentiles*, for they are not our neighbours, but those only that are of our own nation and religion. They would not put an Israelite to death for killing a Gentile, for he was not his neighbour; indeed they say they ought not to kill a Gentile that they were not at war with; but if they saw a Gentile in danger of death, they thought themselves under no obligation to help to save his life. Such wicked inferences did they draw from that holy covenant of peculiarity which God had distinguished them by, and by abusing it thus they had forfeited it; and God justly took the forfeiture, and transferred covenant favours to the Gentile world, to whom they brutishly denied common favours.

2. How Christ corrected this inhuman notion, and shewed by a parable, that whoever we have need to receive kindness from, and find ready to shew us the kindness we need, we cannot but look upon as our neighbour; and therefore ought to look upon all those as such who need our kindness, and to shew them kindness accordingly, though they be not of our own nation and religion. Now observe,

1. The parable itself, which represents to us a poor Jew in distressed circumstances, succoured and relieved by a good Samaritan. Let us see here,

1. How he was abused by his enemies: the honest man was travelling peace-

peaceably upon his lawful occasions in the road, and it was a great road that lead from Jerusalem to Jericho, *ver.* 30. The mentioning of those places, intimates that it was matter of fact, and not a parable, and probably it happened lately, just as it is here related. The occurrences of providence would yield us many good instructions, if we would carefully observe and improve them, and would be equivalent to parables framed on purpose for instruction, and be more *affecting*. This poor man *fell among thieves*. Whether they were Arabians, rapparees, that lived by spoil, or some profligate wretches of his own nation, or some of the Roman soldiers, who notwithstanding the strict discipline of their army did this villainy, doth not appear; but they were very *barbarous*, they not only took his money, but stripped him of his clothes, and that he might not be able to pursue them, or only gratify a cruel disposition, (for otherwise *what profit was there in his blood?*) they *wounded him*, and left him *half dead*, ready to die of his wounds. We may here conceive a just indignation at *highwaymen*, that have divested themselves of all humanity, and are as natural brute-beasts, beasts of prey, made to be *taken and destroyed*; and at the same time we cannot but think with compassion on those that fall into the hand of such wicked and unreasonable men, and be ready when it is in our power to help them. And what reason have we to thank God for our preservation from perils by robbers!

2. How he was slighted by those that should have been his friends, who were not only men of his own nation and religion, but one a priest, and the other a Levite, men of a public character and station; nay, they were men of professed sanctity, whose offices obliged them to tenderness and compassion, *Heb.* v. 2. who ought to teach others their duty in such a case as this, which was to *deliver them that were drawn unto death*, yet they would not themselves do it. Dr. Lightfoot tells us that many of the courses of the priests had their residence in Jericho, and from thence came up to Jerusalem, when it was their turn to officiate there, and so back again, which occasioned abundance of *passing and repassing* of priests that way, and Levites their attendants; they came *this way*, and saw the poor wounded man, it is likely they heard his groans, and could not but perceive that if he were not helped he must quickly perish. The Levite not only saw him, but *came and looked on him*, *ver.* 32. but they *passed by on the other side*; when they saw his case they got as far off him as ever they could, as if they would have had a pretence to say, *Behold, we know it not*. It is sad when those who should be examples of charity are prodigies of cruelty; and who should, by displaying the mercies of God, open the bowels of others' compassion, shut up their own.

3. How he was *succoured and relieved* by a *stranger*, a *certain Samaritan*, of that nation which of all other the Jews despised and detested, and would have no dealings with; this man had some humanity in him, *ver.* 33. The priest had his heart hardened against one of *his own people*, but the Samaritan had his opened towards one of another people; *when he saw him he had compassion on him*, and never took into consideration what country he was of; though he was a Jew, he was a man, and a man in misery, and he was learned to honour all men: he knows not how soon this poor man's case may be his own, and therefore pities him, as he himself would desire and expect to be pitied in the like case. That so great love should be found in a Samaritan, was perhaps thought as great as that faith which Christ admired in a Roman, in a woman of Canaan; but really was not so, for pity is the work of a man, but faith is the work of divine grace.

The compassion of this Samaritan was not an idle compassion; he did not think it enough to say, Be healed, be helped, (*Jam.* ii. 16.) but when he *drew out his soul*, he *reached forth his hand* also to this poor needy creature, *Ifa.* lviii. 7, 10. *Prov.* xxxi. 20. See how friendly this good Samaritan was. (1.) He *went to the poor man*, whom the priest and Levite kept at a distance from, he inquired no doubt how he came into this deplorable condition, and consoled him. (2.) He did the surgeon's part for want of a better; he *bound up his wounds*, making use of his own linen it is likely for that purpose; and *poured in oil and wine*, which perhaps he had with him; wine to wash the wound, and oil to mollify it, and close it up: he did all he could to ease the pain and prevent the peril of his wounds, as one whose heart bled with them. (3.) He *set him on his own beast*, and went on foot himself, and *brought him to an inn*. And a great mercy it is to have inns upon the road, where we may be furnished for our money with all conveniences for food and rest. Perhaps the Samaritan, if he had not met with this hinderance, would have got that night to his journey's end, but in compassion to that poor man he takes up short at an inn. Some think the priest and Levite pretend they could not stay to help the poor man, because they were in haste to go and attend the temple service at Jerusalem. We suppose this Samaritan went upon business; but he understood that both his own business and God's sacrifice too must give place to such an act of mercy as this. (4.) He *took care of him* in the inn, got him to bed, had food for him that was proper, and due attendance, and it may be prayed with him. Nay, (5.) As if he had been his own child or one he was obliged to look after, when he left him next morning, he left money with the landlord to be laid out for his use; and passed his word for what he should spend more. *Two pence* of their money was about fifteen pence of ours, which, according to the rate of things then, would go a great way, however here it was an earnest of content to the full of all demands. Now all this was kind and generous, and as much as one could have expected from a friend or a brother; and yet here it is done by a stranger and foreigner.

Now this parable is applicable to another purpose than that for which it was intended; and doth excellently set forth the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards sinful, miserable man. We were like this poor distressed traveller: Satan, our enemy, had *robbed us, stripped us, wounded us*, such is the mischief that sin hath done us; we are by nature more than *half dead*, twice dead in trespasses and sins; utterly unable to help ourselves for we were without strength. The law of Moses, like the priest and Levite, the ministers of that law, *looks upon us*, but has no compassion on us, gives us no relief, it *passeth by on the other side*, as having neither pity nor power to help us; but then comes the blessed Jesus, that good Samaritan, (and they said of him by way of reproach, *He is a Samaritan*) he has compassion on us, he binds up our bleeding wounds, (*Psal.* cxlvii. 3. *Ifa.* vi. 1.) pours in *not oil and wine*, but that which is infinitely more precious, *his own blood*; he takes care of us, and bids us put all the expences of our cure upon his account; and all this, though he was none of us, till he pleased by his voluntary condescension to make himself so, but infinitely above us. This magnifies the riches of his love, and obligeth us all to say, How much are we indebted, and what shall we render?

2. The reddition or application of the parable.

1. The truth contained in it is extorted from the lawyer's own mouth. Now tell me, faith Christ, *Which of those three was neighbour to him that fell among thieves*, *ver.* 36. the priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan? Which of those did the neighbour's part? To this the lawyer would not answer as he ought to have done, Doubtless the Samaritan was; but he that shewed mercy on him: doubtless he was a good neighbour to him and very neighbourly, and he could not but say it was a good work thus to save an honest Jew from perishing.

2. The duty inferred from it is pressed home upon the lawyer's own conscience; *Go, and do thou likewise*. The duty of relations is mutual and reciprocal; the titles of friends, brethren, neighbours, are as Grotius here speaks, *τὸν πρὸς τὴν*, equally binding on both sides: if one side be bound, the other cannot be loose, as is agreed in all contracts. If a Samaritan doth well that helps a distressed Jew, certainly a Jew doth not well if he do not in like manner help a distressed Samaritan. *Petimusque damusque vicissim*. And therefore *go thou* and do as the Samaritan did whenever occasion offers; shew mercy to those that need thy help, and do it freely, and with concern and compassion, though they be not of thy own nation and thy own profession, opinion and communion in religion. Let thy charity be thus extensive before thou boastest of having conformed thyself to that great commandment of *loving thy neighbour*. This lawyer valued himself much upon his learning, and his knowledge of the laws, and in that he thought to have puzzled Christ himself, but Christ sends him to school to a Samaritan to learn his duty; go, and do like him. Note, It is the duty of every one of us, in our places, and according to our ability, to succour, help, and relieve all that are in distress and necessity, and of lawyers particularly, and herein we must study to excel many that are proud of their being priests and Levites.

38. ¶ Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha, received him into her house. 30. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. 40. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. 41. And Jesus answered, and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and troubled about many things: 42. But one thing is needful. And Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

We may observe this story,

First, The entertainment which Martha gave to Christ and his disciples at her house, *ver.* 38. Observe, 1. Christ's coming to the village where Martha lived. As they went (Christ and his disciples together) he and they with him *entered into a certain village*. This village was Bethany, nigh to Jerusalem, whither Christ was now going up, and he took this in his way. Note, 1. Our Lord Jesus went about doing good, *Act.* x. 38. scattering his benign beams and influences as the true light of the world. 2. Wherever Christ went, his disciples went along with him. 3. Christ honoured the country villages with his presence and favour, and not the great and populous cities only, for as he *chose privacy*, so he *countenanced poverty*.

2. His reception at Martha's house. A certain woman named Martha received him into her house, and bid him welcome, for she was the housekeeper. Note, 1. Our Lord Jesus, when he was here upon earth, was so poor, that he was necessitated to be beholden to his friends for a subsistence. Though he was Zion's king, he had no house of his own either in Jerusalem or near it. 2. There were some that were Christ's particular friends, whom he loved more than any other of his friends, and them he visited most frequently. He loved this family, *John* xi. 5. and often invited himself to them. Christ's visits are the tokens of his love, *John* xiv. 22. 3. There were those who kindly received Christ into their house, when he was here upon earth. It is called Martha's house, for probably she was a widow, and was the housekeeper. Though it was chargeable to entertain Christ, for he did not come alone, but brought his disciples with him, yet she would not stick at the expence of it: how can we spend what we have better than in Christ's service! nay, though at this time it was grown dangerous to entertain him, especially to near Jerusalem, yet she cared not what hazard she run for his name's sake, though there were many that rejected him, and would not entertain him, yet there was one that bid him welcome. Though Christ is every where spoken against, yet there is a remnant to whom he is dear, and that are dear to him.

Secondly, The attendance which Mary, the sister of Martha, gave upon the word of Christ, *ver.* 40. (1.) She *heard his word*. It seems, our Lord Jesus as soon as he came into Martha's house, even before entertainment was got for him, addressed himself to his great work of preaching the gospel: he presently took the chair with solemnity, for Mary sat to hear him, which intimates that it was a continued discourse. Note, A good sermon is never the worse for being preached in a house; and the visits of our friends should be so managed, as to make them turn to a spiritual advantage. Mary having this prize put into her hands, sat herself to improve it, not knowing when she should have such another. Since Christ is forward to speak, we should be *swift to hear*. 2. She sat to hear, which notes a close attention; her mind was composed, and she resolved to abide by it; not to catch a word now and then, but to receive all that Christ delivered. She *sat at his feet*, as scholars at the feet of their tutors when they read their lectures; hence Paul is said to be *brought up at the feet of Gamaliel*. Our sitting at Christ's feet when we hear his word, signifies a readiness to receive his word, and a submission and entire resignation of ourselves to the conduct of it. We must either sit at Christ's feet or be made his footstool; but if we sit with him at his feet now, we shall sit with him on his throne shortly.

Thirdly, The care of Martha about her domestic affairs. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, *ver.* 40. and that was the reason why she was not where Mary was, sitting at Christ's feet to hear his word. She was providing for the entertainment of Christ, and those that came with him. Perhaps she had no notice before of his coming, and she was unprovided, but was in care to have every thing handsome upon this occasion, she had not such guests every day. And housekeepers know what care and bustle there must be, when a great entertainment is to be made. Observe here,

1. Something commendable, which must not be overlooked. (1.) Here was a commendable respect to our Lord Jesus, for we have reason to think it was not for ostentation, but purely to testify her good will to him, that she made this entertainment. Note, Those who truly love Christ, will think that well bestowed that is laid out for his honour. (2.) Here was a commendable care of her household affairs. It appears by the respect shewed to this family among the Jews (*John* xi. 19.) that they were persons of some quality and distinction, and yet Martha herself did not think it a disparagement to her to lay her hand even to the service of the family when there was occasion for it. Note, It is the duty of those who have the charge of families, to *look well to the ways of the household*. The affectation of state, and the love of ease, make many families neglected.

2. Here was something culpable, which we must take notice of too. (1.) She

She was for *much serving*; her heart was upon it to have a very sumptuous and splendid entertainment; great plenty, great variety, and great exactness, according to the fashion of the place. She was in care, *περί πολλῆν διακονίαν*, concerning *much attendance*. Note, It doth not become the disciples of Christ to affect *much serving*, to affect varieties, dainties, and superfluities in eating and drinking; what need *much serving*, when much less will serve? (2.) She was *cumbered* about it, *περισπαστο*. She was just *distracted* with it. Note, Whatever cares the providence of God casts upon us, we must not be *cumbered* with them, nor be disquieted and perplexed by them. Care is good, and duty, but *cumber* is sin and folly. (3.) She was then *cumbered* about *much serving*, when she should have been with her sister sitting at Christ's feet to hear his word. Note, Worldly business is then a snare to us when it hinders us from serving God, and getting good to our souls.

Fourthly, The complaint which Martha made to Christ against her sister Mary, for not *assisting* her upon this occasion in the *business of the house*, ver. 40. Lord, dost thou not care that my sister, who is concerned as well as I in having done things well, has left me to serve alone; therefore dismiss her from attending thee, and bid her come help me.

Now, 1. This complaint of Martha's may be considered as a *discovery of her worldliness*: It was the language of her inordinate care and cumber. She speaks as one in a mighty passion with her sister, else she would not have troubled Christ with the matter. Note, The inordinancy of worldly cares and pursuits is often the occasion of disturbance in families, and of strife and contention among relations. And those that are eager upon the world themselves, are apt to blame and censure those that are not so too; and while they justify themselves in their worldliness, and judge of others by their serviceableness to them in their worldly pursuits, they are ready to condemn those who addict themselves to the exercises of religion, as if they neglected the *main chance*, as they call it: Martha being angry at her sister, appealed to Christ, and would have him to say, she *did well to be angry*. Lord, dost thou not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? It should seem as if Christ had sometimes expressed himself tenderly concerned for her, and her ease and comfort, and would not have her go through so much toil and trouble, and the expected he should now bid her sister take her share in it. When Martha was caring, she must have Mary and Christ, and all to care too, or else she is not pleased. Note, Those are not always in the right that are most forward to appeal to God; we must therefore take heed, lest we at any time expect, that Christ should espouse our unjust and groundless quarrels. The cares he calls upon us, we may cheerfully cast upon him, but not those which we foolishly draw upon ourselves. He will be the patron of the poor and injured, but not of the turbulent and injurious.

2. It may be considered as a discouragement of Mary's piety and devotion. Her sister should have commended her for it; should have told her that she was in the right; but, instead of that, she *condemns* her as wanting in her duty. Note, It is no strange thing for those that are zealous in religion to meet with hindrances and discouragements from those that are about them; not only with opposition from enemies, but with blame and censure from their friends. David's fasting, and his dancing before the ark were turned to his reproach.

Fifthly, The reproof which Christ gave to Martha for her inordinate care, ver. 41. she appealed to him, and he gives judgment against her. *Martha, Martha, Thou art careful and troubled about many things, whereas but one thing is needful.*

1. He reproveth her, though he was at this time her guest, and her fault was her over-solicitude to entertain him, and she expected he should justify her in it, yet he publicly checked her for it. Note, *As many as Christ loves he rebukes and chastens*. Even those that are dear to Christ, if any thing be amiss in them, shall be sure to hear of it. *Nevertheless I have something against thee.*

2. When he reproveth her, he called her by her name Martha. For reproofs are then most likely to do good when they are *particular*, applied to particular persons and cases, as Nathan's to David, *Thou art the man*. He repeated her name, Martha, Martha, he speaks as one in earnest, and deeply concerned for her welfare. Those that are *entangled* in the cares of this life, are not easily *disentangled*. To them we must call again and again, *O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord*.

3. That which he reproveth her for, was her being *careful and troubled about many things*. He was not *pleased* that she should think to *please* him with a rich and splendid entertainment, and with perplexing herself to prepare it for him; whereas he would teach us as not to be *sensual* in using such things, so not to be *selfish* in being willing others should be *troubled*, no matter who or how many, so we may be gratified. Christ reprooves her, both for the *intensity* of her care, thou art *careful and troubled, divided and disturbed*, by thy care; and for the *extensiveness* of it, about *many things*: Thou dost *grasp* at many enjoyments, and so art troubled at many *disappointments*. Poor Martha, thou hast many things to fret at, and that puts thee out of humour, whereas less ado would serve. Note, Inordinate care and trouble about many things in this world is a common fault among Christ's disciples, and is very displeasing to Christ, and it is that for which they often come under the rebukes of providence. If they fret for no just cause, it is just with him to order them something to fret at.

4. That which aggravated the sin and folly of her care was, that *but one thing is needful*. It is a *low* construction which some put upon this, that whereas Martha was in care to provide *many* dishes of meat, there was occasion but for one; one would be enough. *There is need but of one thing*, *εὐνοῦ δε σὺν χριστῷ*. If we take it so, it furnishes us with a rule of *temperance*, not to affect varieties and dainties, but be content to sit down to *one* dish of meat, to *half one*, Prov. xxiii. 1, 2, 3. It is a *forced* construction which some of the ancients put upon it, *but oneness is needful*, in opposition to distractions: There is need of *one heart* to attend upon the word, not divided and hurried to and fro, as Martha's was at this time. *But the one thing needful* is certainly meant of that which Mary made her choice, *sitting at Christ's feet to hear his word*. She was troubled about *many things*, when she should have applied herself to one: *godliness unites the heart*, which the world had *divided*. The *many things* she was troubled about were *needless*, while the *one thing* she neglected was *needful*. Martha's care and work was good in its proper season and place, but now she had something else to do, which was unspeakably more needful, and therefore should be done first and most minded. She expected Christ to have blamed Mary for not doing as she did, but he blamed her for not doing as Mary did, and we are sure the judgment of Christ is according to truth. And the day will come, when Martha will wish she had *sitten* where Mary did.

Sixthly, Christ's approbation and commendation of Mary for her serious piety, *Mary hath chosen the good part*. Mary said nothing in her own defence; but since Martha has appealed to the Master, to him she is willing to refer it, and will abide by his award; and here we have it.

1. She had justly given the preference to that which best deserved it. For *one thing is needful*, this one thing that she has done, to give up herself to the conduct of Christ, and receive the law from his mouth. Note, Serious godliness is a *needful* thing, it is the *one thing needful*; for nothing

without this will do us any real good in this world, and nothing but this will go with us into another world.

2. She had herein wisely done well for herself, Christ *justified* Mary against her sister's clamours. However we may be censured and condemned by men for our piety and zeal, our Lord Jesus will take our part; *but thou shalt answer, Lord, for me*. Let not us then condemn the pious zeal of any, lest we set Christ *against* us, never be discouraged if we be censured for our pious zeal, for we have Christ for us. Note, Sooner or later Mary's choice will be justified, and all those who make that choice and abide by it. But this was not all, he *applauded* her for her wisdom, she *hath chosen the good part*, for she chose to be with Christ to take her part with him; she chose the better business, and the better happiness, and took the better way of *honouring* Christ, and of *pleasing* him, by receiving his word into her heart, than Martha did by providing for his entertainment in her house. Note, (1.) *A part with Christ* is a *good part*, it is a part for the soul and eternity, that part Christ gives to his favourites, John xiii. 8. who are partakers of Christ, Heb. iii. 14. and partakers with Christ, Rom. viii. 17. (2.) It is a part that shall *never be taken away from those that have it*. A portion in this life will certainly be *taken away* from us, at the furthest, when we shall be taken away from it; but *nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ*, and our part in that love. Men and devils cannot take it away from us, and God and Christ will not. (3.) It is the wisdom and duty of every one of us to choose this *good part*, to choose the service of God for our business, and the favour of God for our happiness, and an interest in Christ, in order to both. In particular cases we must choose that which has a tendency to religion; and reckon that best for us that is best for our souls. Mary was at her choice, whether she would partake with Martha in her care, and get the reputation of a fine *housekeeper*, or sit at the feet of Christ, and approve herself a *zealous disciple*; and by her choice in this particular, Christ judged of her general choice. (4.) Those who *choose this good part*, shall not only have what they choose, but shall have their choice commended in the great day.

C H A P. XI.

In this chapter, (1.) Christ teaches his disciples to pray, and quickens and encourageth them, to be frequent, and instant, and importunate in prayer, ver. 1—13. (2.) He fully answereth the blameworthy imputation of the Pharisees, who charged him with casting out devils by virtue of a compact and confederacy with Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, and shews the absurdity and wickedness of it, ver. 14—26. (3.) He shews the honour of obedient disciples to be greater than that of his own mother, ver. 27, 28. (4.) He upbraids the men of that generation for their infidelity and obstinacy, notwithstanding all the means of conviction offered to them, ver. 29—36. He severely reproveth the Pharisees and lawyers for their hypocrisy, pride, and their oppressing the consciences of those that submitted to them, and their bating and persecuting those that witnessed against their wickedness, ver. 37—54.

1. **A**ND it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. 2. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. 3. Give us day by day our daily bread. 4. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. 5. And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; 6. For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? 7. And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed: I cannot rise and give thee. 8. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. 9. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. 10. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. 11. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? 12. Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13. If ye then, being evil, knowing how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Prayer is one of the great laws of natural religion: that man is a brute, is a monster, that never prays; that never gives glory to his Maker, nor feels his favour, nor owns his dependence upon him. One great design therefore of Christianity is, to *assist us in prayer*: to enforce the duty upon us; and to instruct us in it, and encourage us to expect advantage by it. Now here,

1. We find Christ himself *praying in a certain place*, probably where he used to pray, ver. 1. As God he was *prayed to*, as man he *prayed*; and though he were a Son, yet learned this obedience. This Evangelist has taken particular notice of Christ's *praying often*, more than other of the Evangelists; when he was baptized, chap. iii. 21. he was *praying*: He *withdrew into the wilderness and prayed*, chap. v. 16. He *went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer*. He was *alone praying*, chap. ix. 18. And soon after he *went up into a mountain to pray, and as he prayed, he was transfigured*, chap. ix. 28, 29. and here he was *praying in a certain place*. Thus like a genuine son of David, he *gave himself unto prayer*, Psalm cix. 4. whether Christ was now *alone* praying, and the disciples only knew that he was so, or whether he prayed with them, is uncertain; it is most probable they were joining with him.

2. His disciples applied themselves to him for direction in prayer; when he was praying they asked, *Lord, teach us to pray*. Note, The gifts and graces of others should excite us to covet earnestly the same: Their zeal should provoke us to a holy imitation and emulation, why should not we do as well as they? Observe, They came to him with this request, *when he ceased*; for they would not disturb him while he was at prayer, no, not with this good motion. Every thing is beautiful in its season. *One of his disciples* in the name of the rest, and perhaps by their appointment, said, *Lord teach us*. Note, Though Christ is *apt to teach*, yet he will for this be enquired of, and his disciples must attend him for instruction.

Now, (1.) Their request is, *Lord, teach us to pray*; give us a rule or model by which to go in praying, and put words into our mouths. Note, It becomes the disciples of Christ to apply themselves to him for instruction in prayer; *Lord, teach us to pray*, is itself a good prayer, and is a very needful one, for it is a hard thing to *pray well*; and it is Jesus Christ only, that can *teach us*, by his word and Spirit, *how to pray*. Lord, teach me what it is to pray; Lord, excite and quicken me to duty; Lord, direct me what to pray for; Lord, give me praying graces, that I may serve God acceptably in prayer; Lord, teach me to pray in proper words; give me a mouth and wisdom in prayer, that I may speak as I ought; *teach me what I shall say*.

(2.) Their plea is, *as John also taught his disciples*. He took care to instruct his disciples in this necessary duty, and we would be taught as they were, for we have a better master than they had. Dr. Lightfoot's notion of this is, That whereas the Jews' prayers were generally adorations and praises of God, and doxologies, John taught his disciples such prayers as were more filled up with petitions and requests; for it is said of them that they did *δευτεῖς ποιεῖν, make prayers*, Luke v. 33. The word signifies such prayers as are properly petitionary. Now, Lord, teach us those, to be added to those benedictions of the name of God, which we have been accustomed to from our childhood. And according to this sense, Christ did there teach them a prayer consisting wholly of petitions, and even omitting the doxology which had been affixed; and the *amen*, which was usually said in the giving of thanks, 1 Cor. xiv. 16. and in the Psalms is added to doxologies only. This disciple needed not to have urged John Baptist's example: Christ was more ready to teach than ever John Baptist was, and particularly taught to pray better than John did or could teach his disciples.

3. Christ gave them direction; much the same that he had given them before in his sermon upon the mount, *Matt. vi. 9*. We cannot think that they had forgot it, but they thought to have further and fuller instructions, and he did not, as yet, think fit to give them any; when the Spirit should be poured out upon them from on high, they would find all their request couched in these few, and would be able, in words of their own, to expatiate and enlarge upon them. In Matthew he had directed them to pray *after this manner*: Here, *when ye pray, say*; which intimates that the Lord's prayer was intended to be used both as a form of prayer and a directory.

2. There are some differences between the Lord's prayer in Matthew and in Luke, by which it appears that it was not the design of Christ that we should be *tyed up* to these very words, for then there would have been no variation. Here is one difference in the translation only, which ought not to have been, when there is none in the original, and that is in the third petition; *as in heaven, so in earth*: whereas the words are the very same, and in the same order as in Matthew; but there is a difference in the fourth petition; in Matthew we pray, *give us daily bread this day*; here, give it us *day by day*, *καὶ ἡμεῖν, day by day* is, give us *each day* the bread which our bodies require, as they call for it: Not give us *this day* bread for many days to come; but as the Israelites had manna, let us have bread *to-day* for *to-day*, and *to-morrow* for *to-morrow*, for thus we may be kept in a continual dependence upon God, as children upon their parents, and may have our mercies fresh from his hand daily, and may find ourselves under fresh obligations to do the work of every day in the day, according as the *duty of the day* requires, because we have from God the supplies of every day in the day, according as the necessity of the day requires.

Here is likewise some difference in the fifth petition: In Matthew it is, *forgive us our debts*, as we forgive. Here it is, *forgive us our sins*, which proves that our sins are our debts, *for we forgive*; not that our forgiving those that have offended us can merit pardon from God, or bear inducement to him to forgive us, he forgives for his own name's sake, and his Son's sake; but this is a very necessary qualification for forgiveness; and if God have wrought it in us, we may plead that work of his grace, for the enforcing our petitions for the pardon of our sins; Lord, forgive us, for thou hast thyself inclined us to forgive others. Here is another addition here; we plead not only in general, we forgive our debtors, but in particular we profess to *forgive every one that is indebted to us*, without exception. We *to forgive our debtors*, as not to bear malice or ill-will to any, but true love to all, without any exception whatsoever.

Here also the doxology in the close is wholly omitted, and the *Amen*; for Christ would leave them at liberty to use that or any other doxology fetched out of David's Psalms; or rather he left a vacuum here to be filled up by a doxology more peculiar to the Christian institutes, ascribing glory to *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*.

2. Yet it is for substance the same; and we shall therefore here only gather up some general lessons from it.

1. That in prayer we ought to come to God as children to a father, a common father to us and all mankind, but in a peculiar manner a father to all the disciples of Jesus Christ. Let us therefore in our requests, both for others and for ourselves, come to him with a humble boldness confiding in his power and goodness.

2. That at the same time, and in the same petitions wherein we address to God for ourselves, we should take in with us *all the children of men* as God's creatures and our fellow-creatures. A rooted principle of catholic charity, and of *Christian sanctified humanity*, should go along with us, and dictate to us throughout this prayer, which is so worded as to be accommodated to that noble principle.

3. That in order to the confirming of the habit of heavenly-mindedness in us, which ought to act and govern us in the whole course of our conversation, we should in all our devotions with an eye of faith look *heavenwards*, and eye the God we pray to as our Father in heaven, that we may make the *upper world* more familiar to us, and may ourselves become better prepared for the future state.

4. That in prayer, as well as in the tenor of our lives, we must *seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof*, by ascribing honour to his name, his holy name, and power to his government, both that of his providence in the world, and that of his grace in the church. O that both the one and the other may be more manifested, and we and others more manifestly brought into subjection to both!

5. That the *principles and practices* of the *upper world*, the *unseen world* (which therefore by faith only we are *apprised of*) are the *great original* (the ἀρχαῖον) to which we should desire the principles and practices of this *lower world*, both in others and in ourselves, may be more conform-

able. Those words, *As in heaven so on earth*, refer to all the three first petitions; Father, let thy name be sanctified and glorified, and thy kingdom prevail, and thy will be done on this earth that is now alienated from thy service, as it is in yonder heaven, that is entirely devoted to thy service.

6. That those who faithfully and sincerely mind the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, may humbly hope that *all other things* as far as to infinite wisdom seems good, *shall be added to them*, and they may in faith pray for them. If our first chief desire and care be that God's name may be sanctified, and his kingdom come, and his will be done, we may then come boldly to the throne of grace for our *daily-bread*, which will then be sanctified to us when we are sanctified to God, and God is sanctified by us.

7. That in our prayers for temporal blessings we must *moderate* our desires and confine them to a *competency*. The expression here used of *day by day*, is the very same with our *daily bread*, and therefore some think we must look for another signification of the word *ἐπιζήτει*, than that of *daily*, which we give it, and that it means our *necessary bread*; that bread that is suited to the cravings of our nature; the fruit that is brought out of the earth for our bodies that are made of the earth, and are earthly, *Psalms civ. 14*.

8. That sins are debts we are daily contracting, and which therefore we should every day pray for the forgiveness of. We are not only going behind of our rent every day by *omissions* of duty, and in duty, but are daily incurring the penalty of the law, as well as the forfeiture of our bond by our *commissions*; every day adds to the score of our guilt, and it is a miracle of mercy, that we have so much encouragement given us to come every day to the throne of grace, to pray for the pardon of our sins of daily infirmity. God multiplies to pardon beyond seventy times seven.

9. That we have no reason to expect, or can with any confidence pray that God would forgive our sins against him, if we do not *sincerely*, and from a truly Christian principle of *charity*, forgive those that have at any time affronted us, or been injurious to us. Though the words of our mouth be even *this prayer* to God, if the meditation of our heart at the same time be, as often as it is, malice and revenge to our brethren, we are not accepted, nor can we expect an answer of peace.

10. That temptations to sin should be as much dreaded and deprecated by us as ruin by sin; and it should be as much our care and prayer to get the power of sin broken in us, as to get the guilt of sin removed from us; and though temptation may be a charming, flattering thing, we must be as earnest with God that we may not be led into that, as that we may not be led by that to sin, and by sin to ruin.

Lastly, that God is to be depended upon, and sought unto for our deliverance from all evil; and we should pray not only that we may not be left to Satan to bring evil upon us. Dr. Lightfoot understands it of being delivered from the evil one, that is, the devil, and suggests that we pray particularly against the apparitions of the devil and his possessions. The disciples were employed to *cast out devils*, and therefore were concerned to pray that they might be guarded against the particular spite he would always be sure to have against them.

4. He stirs up and encourageth importunity, fervency, and constancy in prayer, by shewing,

1. That importunity will go far in our dealings with men, *ver. 5, 6, 7*. Suppose a man, upon a sudden emergency, goes to borrow a loaf or two of bread of a neighbour, at an unreasonable time of night, not for himself, but for his friend that came unexpectedly to him: His neighbour will be loth to accommodate him, for he has awakened him with his knocking, and put him out of humour, and he has a great deal to say in his excuse: the door is shut and locked, his children are asleep in bed, in the same room with him, and if he make a noise he shall disturb them; his servants are asleep and he cannot make them hear; and for his own part, he shall catch cold if he ariseth to give him; but his neighbour will have no way, and therefore he continues knocking still, and tells him he will do so till he has what he comes for; so that he must give it him to be rid of him; *he will rise and give him as many as he needs, because of his importunity*. He speaks this parable with the same intent that he speaks that, *Luke xviii. 1*. That men ought always to pray and not to faint. Not that God can be wrought upon by importunity, we cannot be troublesome to him, nor by being so, change his counsels: We prevail with men by importunity, because they are *displeased* with it, but with God, because he is *pleased* with it. Now this similitude may be of use to us,

(1.) To direct us in prayer. (1.) We must come to God with *boldness and confidence* for what we need, as a man doth to the house of his neighbour or friend, who, he knows, loves him, or is inclined to be kind to him. (2.) We must come for *bread*, for that which is *needful*, and which we cannot be without. (3.) We must come to him by prayer *for others*, as well as for ourselves. This man did not come for bread for himself, but for his friend. The Lord accepted Job when he prayed for his friends, *Job xlii. 10*. We cannot come to God upon a more pleasing errand, than when we come to him for grace to enable us to do good, to *feed many with our lips*; to entertain and edify those that come to us. (4.) We may come with the more boldness to God in a straight, if it be a straight that we have not brought ourselves into by our own folly and carelessness, but providence has led us into it. The man would not have wanted bread if his friend had not come in unexpectedly. The care which providence casts upon us; we may with cheerfulness cast back upon providence. (5.) We ought to *continue instant* in prayer, and watch in the same with all perseverance.

(2.) To encourage us in prayer. If importunity could prevail thus with a man, that was angry at it, much more with God, who is infinitely more kind and ready to do good to us than we are to one another, and he is not angry at our importunity, but accepts it, especially when it is for spiritual mercies that we are importunate. If he do not answer our prayers presently, yet he will in due time, if we continue to pray.

2. That God hath promised to give us what we ask of him. We have not only the goodness of nature to take comfort from, but the word which he hath spoken, *ver. 9, 10*. *Ask, and it shall be given you*: either the thing itself you shall ask, or that which is equivalent; either the thorn in the flesh removed, or grace sufficient given in. We had this before, *Mat. vii. 7, 8*. *I say unto you*. We have it from Christ's own mouth, who knows his Father's mind, and in whom all promises are yea and amen. We must not only ask, but we must seek in the use of means, must second our prayers with our endeavours: And in asking and seeking, we must continue *pressing*; still knocking at the same door, and we shall at length prevail, not only by our prayers in concert, but by our particular prayers, *every one that asketh receiveth*, even the meanest saint that asks in faith. *This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him*, *Palm xxxiv. 6*. When we ask of God those things which Christ had just now directed us to ask, that his name may be sanctified, that his kingdom may come, and his will be done; in these requests we must be importunate, must *never hold our peace day or night*; we must not keep silence, nor give God any rest, until he establish, until he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth, *Isa. lxii. 6, 7*.

5. He gives us both instruction and encouragement in prayer, from the consideration of our relation to God as a father. Here is,

1. An appeal to the bowels of earthly fathers. Let any of you that is a father, and knows the heart of a father, a father's affection to a child, and care for a child, tell me if his son ask bread for his breakfast, will he give him a stone to breakfast on? If he ask a fish for his dinner (when it may be it is a fish day) will he for a fish give him a serpent, that will poison and sting him? Or, if he shall ask for an egg for his supper, an egg and to bed, will he offer him a scorpion? You know you could not be so unnatural to your own children, ver. 11, 12.

2. An application of this to the blessings of our heavenly Father, ver. 13. If ye then being evil give, and know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall God give you the Spirit: He should give good things; so it is in Matthew. Observe,

1. The direction he gives us what to pray for; we must ask for the Holy Spirit, not only as necessary in order to our praying well, but as inclusive of all the good things we are to pray for, we need no more to make us happy, for the Spirit is the worker of spiritual life, and the earnest of eternal life. Note, The gift of the Holy Ghost is a gift we are every one of us concerned earnestly and constantly to pray for.

2. The encouragement he gives us to hope that we shall speed in this prayer; your heavenly Father will give. It is in his power to give the Spirit; he has all good things to bestow, wrapped up in that one; but that is not all, it is in his promise, the gift of the Holy Ghost is in the covenant, Acts xxiii. And it is here inferred from parents' readiness to supply their children's needs, and gratify their desires, when they are natural and proper. If the child ask for a serpent or a scorpion, the father in kindness denies him, but not if he ask for what is needful and will be nourishing. When God's children ask for the Spirit, they do in effect ask for bread, for the Spirit is the staff of life; nay, he is the author of the soul's life. If our earthly parents, though evil, be yet so kind; if they, though weak, be yet so knowing; that they not only give, but give with discretion, give what is best in the best manner and time, much more shall your heavenly Father, who infinitely excels the fathers of our flesh both in wisdom and goodness, give you his Holy Spirit. If earthly parents are willing to lay out for the education of their children, to whom they design to leave their estates, much more will your heavenly Father give the spirit of sons to all those whom he has predestinated to the inheritance of sons.

14. ¶ And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered. 15. But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils. 16. And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven. 17. But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. 18. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub. 19. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. 20. But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. 21. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: 22. But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. 23. He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth. 24. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest: and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. 25. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. 26. Then goeth he and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself: and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

The substance of these verses we had, Matt. xii. 22. and Christ is here giving a general proof of his divine mission, by a particular proof of his power over Satan; his conquest of whom, was an indication of his great design in coming into the world, which was to destroy the works of the devil; and an earnest of the success of that undertaking. He is here casting out a devil that made the poor possessed man dumb, in Matthew we are told that he was blind and dumb: And when the devil was forced out by the word of Christ, the dumb spake immediately, echoed to Christ's word, and the lips were opened to shew forth his praise. Now,

1. Some were afflicted with this miracle: the people wondered; they admired the power of God, and especially that it should be exerted by the hand of one who made so small a figure, that one who did the work of the Messiah should have so little of that pomp of the Messiah they expected.

2. Others were offended at it, and to justify their infidelity, suggested that it was by virtue of a league with Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, that he did this, ver. 15. It seems, in the devil's kingdom there are chiefs, which supposeth that there are subalterns. Now they would have it thought, or said at least, that there was a correspondence settled between Christ and the devil, that the devil should have the advantage in the main, and be victorious at last, but that in order hereto in particular instances, he should yield Christ the advantage, and retire by consent. And some to corroborate this suggestion, and confront the evidence of Christ's miraculous power, challenged him to give them a sign from heaven, ver. 16. to confirm his doctrine by some appearance in the clouds, such as was upon Mount Sinai when the law was given; as if a sign from heaven, not disproveable by any sagacity of theirs, could not have been given them as well as by a compact and collusion with the prince of the power of the air, who works with power and lying wonders as the casting out of a devil; nay, that would not have been any present prejudice to his interest, which this manifestly was. Note, Obstinate infidelity will never be to seek for something to say in its own excuse, though never so frivolous and absurd.

Now Christ here returns a full and direct answer to this cavil of theirs; In which he shews,

1. That it can by no means be imagined that such a subtil prince as Satan is, should ever give into measures that had such a direct tendency to his own overthrow, and the undermining of his own kingdom, ver. 17, 18. What

they objected they kept to themselves, afraid to speak it lest it should be answered and baffled; but Jesus knew their thoughts, even when they industriously thought to conceal them; and he said, You yourselves cannot but see the groundlessness, and consequently the spitefulness of this charge, for it is an allowed maxim, confirmed by every day's experience, that no interest can stand that is divided against itself; not the more public interest of a kingdom; nor the private interest of a house or family; if either the one or the other be divided against itself it cannot stand. Satan would herein act against himself, not only by the miracle which turned him out of possession of the bodies of people, but much more in the doctrine which the miracle was wrought for the explication and confirmation of, which had a direct tendency to the ruin of Satan's interest in the minds of men, by mortifying sin, and turning men to the service of God: Now if Satan should thus be divided against himself, he would hasten his own overthrow, which you cannot suppose an enemy to do that acts so subtly for his own establishment, and is so solicitous to have his kingdom stand.

2. That it was a very partial ill-natured thing for them to impute that in him to a compact with Satan, which yet they applauded and admired in others that were of their own nation, ver. 19. By whom do your sons cast them out? Some of their own kindred, as Jews, nay, and some of their own followers, as Pharisees, have undertaken in the name of the God of Israel to cast out devils, and they were never charged with such a hellish combination as I am charged with. Note, It is gross hypocrisy to condemn that in those who reprove us, which yet we allow of those that flatter us.

3. That in opposing the conviction of this miracle, they were enemies to themselves, stood in their own light, and put a bar in their own door, for they thrust from them the kingdom of God, ver. 20. If I with the finger of God cast out devils, as you may assure yourselves I do, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you: the kingdom of the Messiah offers itself and all its advantages to you, and if you receive it not, it is at your peril. In Matthew it is by the Spirit of God, here by the finger of God; the Spirit is the arm of the Lord, Isa. liii. 1. His most great and mighty works were wrought by his Spirit; but if the Spirit in this work is said to be the finger of the Lord, which perhaps may intimate how easily Christ did, and could conquer Satan, even with the finger of God; the exerting of the divine power in a less and lower degree than in many other instances. He needed not make bare his everlasting arm, that roaring lion, when he pleaseth, is crushed like a moth with a touch of a finger. Perhaps here is an allusion to the acknowledgment of Pharaoh's magicians, when they were run aground, Exod. viii. 19. This is the finger of God. Now if the kingdom of God be herein come to you, and you be found by those cavils and blasphemies fighting against it, it will come upon you, as a victorious force which you cannot stand before.

4. That his casting out of devils was really the destroying of them and their power, for it confirmed a doctrine which had a direct tendency to the ruining of his kingdom, ver. 21, 22. perhaps there had been some who had cast out the inferior devils by compact with Beelzebub their chief; but that was without any real damage or prejudice to Satan and his kingdom; what he lost one way he gained another. The devil and such exorcists played booty, as we say, and while the forlorn hope of his army gave ground, the main body thereby gained ground; the interest of Satan in the souls of men was not weakened by it in the least. But when Christ cast out devils, he needed not do it by any compact with them, for he was stronger than they, and could do it by force, and did it so as to ruin Satan's power, and blast his great design by a doctrine and grace that breaks the power of sin, and so routs Satan's main body, takes from him all his armour, and divides his spoils, which no one devil ever did to another, or ever will. Now this is applicable to Christ's victories over Satan, both in the world and in the hearts of particular persons, by that power which went along with the preaching of his gospel, and doth still. And so we may observe here,

1. The miserable condition of an unconverted sinner: In his heart which was fitted to be a habitation of God, the devil has his palace, and all the powers and faculties of the soul being employed by him in the service of sin are his goods. Note, 1. The heart of every unconverted sinner is the devil's palace, where he resides, and where he rules; he works in the children of disobedience. The heart is a palace, a noble dwelling; but the un sanctified heart is the devil's palace. His lusts are done, his interests are served, and the militia is in his hands; he usurps the throne in the soul. 2. The devil as a strong man armed keeps this palace, doth all he can to secure it to himself, and to fortify it against Christ. All the prejudices with which he hardens man's hearts against truth and holiness, are the strong holds which he erects for the keeping of his palace: this palace is his garrison. 3. There is a kind of peace in the palace of an unconverted soul, while the devil as a strong man armed keepeth it. The sinner has a good opinion of himself, is very secure and merry, has no doubt concerning the goodness of his state, nor any dread of the judgment to come, he flatters himself in his own eyes, and cries peace to himself. Before Christ appeared all was quiet, because all went one way; but the preaching of the gospel disturbed the peace of the devil's palace.

2. The wonderful change that is made in conversion, which is Christ's victory over this usurper: Satan is a strong man armed; but our Lord Jesus is stronger than he, as God, as Mediator: If we speak of strength he is strong: more are with us than against us.

Observe, 1. The manner of this victory. He comes upon him by surprise, when his goods are in peace, and the devil thinks it is all his own for ever, and overcomes him. Note, The conversion of a soul to God is Christ's victory over the devil, and his power in that soul, restoring the soul to its liberty, and recovering his own interest in it, and dominion over it.

2. The evidences of this victory. (1.) He taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted. The devil is a confident adversary, he trusts to his armour, as Pharaoh to his rivers, Ezek. xxix. 3. but Christ disarms him. When the power of sin and corruption in the soul is broken, when the mistakes are rectified, the eyes opened, the heart humbled and changed, and made serious and spiritual, then Satan's armour is taken away. (2.) He divideth the spoils; he takes possession of them for himself, all the endowments of mind or body, the estate, power, interest, which before were made use of in the service of sin and Satan, are now converted to Christ's service, and employed for him; yet that is not all, he makes a distribution of them among his followers, and having conquered Satan, gives to all believers the benefit of that victory.

Now from hence he infers, that seeing the whole drift of his doctrine and miracles was to break the power of the devil, that great enemy of mankind, it was the duty of all to join with him, and to follow his conduct, to receive his gospel, and come heartily into the interests of it, for otherwise they would justly be reckoned as siding with the enemy, ver. 23. He that is not with me is against me. Those therefore who rejected the doctrine of Christ, and slighted his miracles, were looked upon as adversaries to him, and in the devil's interest.

3. That there was a vast difference between the devil's going out by compact, and his being cast out by compulsion. Those out of whom Christ cast him he never entered into again, for so was Christ's charge, Mark ix. 25.

Whereas

Whereas if he had *gone out* whenever he saw fit, he would have made a re- entry, for that is the way of the unclean spirit, when he voluntarily and with design *goes out of a man*, ver. 24, 25, 26. The prince of the devils may *give leave*, nay, may *give order* to his forces to retreat, or make a feint, to draw the poor deluded soul into an *ambush*; but Christ as he gives a *total*, so he gives a *final* defeat to the enemy.

And in this part of the argument he has a further reach, which is to represent the state of those who have had fair offers made them, among whom and in whom God has begun to break the devil's power, and overthrow his kingdom, but they reject his counsels against themselves, and relapse into a state of subjection to Satan. Here we have,

1. The condition of a *formal hypocrite*, his *bright side*, and his *dark side*; his heart still remains the *devil's house*, he calls it his own, and he retains his interest in it; and yet, (1.) *The unclean spirit is gone out*; he was not *driven out* by the power of converting grace, there was none of that *violence* which the kingdom of heaven suffers; but he *went out*, withdrew for a time, so that the man seems not to be under the power of Satan as formerly, nor so followed with his temptations; Satan is *gone*, or has *turned himself into an angel of light*. (2.) *The house is swept* from common pollutions, by a forced confession of sin, as Pharaoh's; a feigned contrition for it, as Ahab's; and a partial reformation, as Herod's: There are those that have *escaped the pollutions of the world*, and yet are still under the power of the *god of this world*, 2 Pet. ii. 20. The house is *swept*, but it is not *washed*, and Christ hath said, *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me*; the house must be *washed*, or it is *none of his*. Sweeping takes off only the loose dirt, while the sin that *besets* the sinner, the beloved sin, is untouched. It is swept from the filth that lies open to the eye of the world, but it is not searched and ransacked for secret filthiness, *Matt. xxiii. 25*. It is *swept*, but the *leprosy is in the wall*, and will be till something more be done. (3.) *The house is garnished* with common gifts and graces; it is not *furnished* with any true grace; but *garnished* with the pictures of all graces. Simon Magus was *garnished* with faith; Balaam with good desires; Herod with a respect for John; the Pharisees with many external performances; it is *garnished*, but it is like a *posserd covered with silver dross*, it is all paint and varnish, not real, not lasting. The house is *garnished*, but the property is not altered, it was never surrendered to Christ, nor inhabited by the Spirit. Let us therefore take heed of resting in that which a man may have, and yet come short.

2. Here is the condition of a *final apostate*, into whom the devil returns after he had *gone out*, ver. 26. *Then goes he and takes seven other spirits more wicked than himself*; a certain number for an uncertain, as *seven devils* are said to be cast out of Mary Magdalen; *seven wicked spirits* are opposed to the *seven spirits of God*, Rev. iii. 1. these are said to be more wicked than himself: It seems, even devils are not all alike wicked; probably the degrees of their wickedness now they are *fallen*, and as the degrees of their holiness were while they stood. When the devil would do mischief most effectually, he employs those that are more mischievous than himself. These *enter in* without any difficulty or opposition, they are welcomed, and they *dwell there*, there they *work*, there they *rule*, and the *last state of that man is worse than the first*. Note, 1. Hypocrisy is the high road to apostacy. If the heart remains in the interest of sin and Satan, the shews and shadows will come to *nothing*; those that have not set that right will not long be steadfast; where secret haunts of sin are kept up under the cloke of a visible profession, conscience is debauched; God is provoked to withdraw his restraining grace, and the *close hypocrite* commonly proves an *open apostate*. 2. The last state of such is *worse than the first*, in respect both of sin and punishment. Apostates are usually the worst of men, the most vain and profligate, the most bold and daring, their consciences are scared, and their sins of all others the most aggravated. God often sets marks of his displeasure upon them in *this world*, and in the other world they will *receive the greater damnation*. Let us therefore hear and fear, and hold fast our integrity.

27. And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lift up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. 28. But he said, Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

We had not this passage in the other evangelists, nor can we tack it, as Dr. Hammond doth, to that of Christ's mother and brethren desiring to speak with him, for this evangelist also had related that some time ago, chap. viii. 19. but it contains an interruption much like that, and, like that, occasion is taken from it for an instruction.

1. The applause which an affectionate, honest, well-meaning woman gave to our Lord Jesus, upon hearing his excellent discourses: While the Scribes and Pharisees despised and blasphemed them, this good woman (and probably she was a person of some quality) admired them, and the wisdom and power with which he spake, ver. 27. *as he spake these things*, with a convincing force and evidence, a *certain woman of the company* was so pleased to hear how he had confounded the Pharisees, and conquered them, and put them to shame and cleared himself from their vile insinuations, that she could not forbear crying out, *Blessed is the womb that bare thee*. What an admirable, what an excellent man is this! surely never was there a greater or better born of a woman: happy the woman that hath him for her son. I should have thought myself very happy to be the mother of one that *speaks as never man speaks*: that hath so much of the grace of heaven in him, and is so great a blessing to this earth. This was *well said*, as it expressed her high esteem of Christ, and that for the sake of his doctrine; and it was not amiss that it reflected honour upon the virgin Mary his mother, for it agreed with what she herself had said, chap. i. 48. *All generations shall call me blessed*; some even of this generation, as bad as it was. Note, To all that believe the word of Christ, the person of Christ is precious, and he is an honour, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Yet we must be careful, lest, as this good woman, we too much magnify the honour of his natural kindred, and so *know him after the flesh*, whereas we must now henceforth *know him so no more*.

2. The occasion which Christ took from them to pronounce them more happy, who are his faithful and obedient followers, than she was who bare and nursed him. He doth not deny what this woman said; nor refuse her respects to him and his mother, but leads her from this to that which was of a higher consideration, and which more concerned her, *Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it*, ver. 28. He thinks them so, and his saying they are so, makes them so, and should make us of his mind. This is intended partly as a *check* to her, for doing so much upon his bodily presence, and his human nature, partly as an encouragement to her to hope that she might be happy as his own mother, whose happiness she was ready to envy, if she would *hear the word of God and keep it*. Note, Though it is a great privilege to hear the word of God, yet those only are

truly blessed, that is, blessed of the Lord, that hear it and *keep it*; that keep it in memory, and keep to it as their way and rule.

29. ¶ And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. 30. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation: 31. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. 32. The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. 33. No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. 34. The light of the body is the eye; therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. 35. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. 36. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

Christ's discourse in these verses shews two things:

1. What is the *sign* we may expect from God, for the confirmation of our faith: The great and most convincing proof of Christ's being sent of God, and which they were yet to wait for, after the many signs that had been given them, was the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Here is,

1. A reproof to the people for demanding other signs than what had already been given them in great plenty, ver. 29. *The people were gathered thick together*, a vast crowd of them expecting not so much to have their consciences informed by the doctrine of Christ, as to have their curiosity gratified by his miracles: And Christ knew what brought such a multitude together, they came *seeking a sign*, they came to gaze, to have something to talk of when they came home; and it is an *evil generation* which nothing will awaken and convince, no not the most sensible demonstrations of divine power and goodness.

2. A promise that yet there should be *one sign* more give them different from any that had yet been given them, even the *sign of Jonas the prophet*, which in Matthew is explained, as meaning the *resurrection of Christ*. As Jonas being cast into the sea, and lying there three days, and then coming up alive, and preaching repentance to the Ninevites, was a sign to them, upon which they turned from their evil way, so shall the death and resurrection of Christ, and the preaching of his gospel immediately after to the Gentile world, be the last warning to the Jewish nation; if they be provoked to a *holy jealousy* by that, well and good; but if that do not work upon them, let them look for nothing else but utter ruin. *The Son of man shall be a sign to this generation*, ver. 30. A sign speaking to them, though a sign spoken against by them.

3. A warning to them to improve this sign, for it was at their peril if they did not.

1. The *Queen of Sheba* would rise up in judgment against them, and condemn their unbelief, ver. 31. She was a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, and yet so readily gave credit to the report she heard of the glories of a king of Israel, that notwithstanding the prejudices we are apt to conceive against foreigners, she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to *hear his wisdom*, not only to satisfy her curiosity, but to inform her mind, especially in the knowledge of the true God and his worship, which is upon record to her honour; and behold, a *greater than Solomon is here*, *ὡλεῖον Σολομῶν*; more than Solomon is here; that is, saith Dr. Hammond, more of wisdom and more heavenly divine doctrine than ever was in all Solomon's words or writings; and yet these wretched Jews will give no manner of regard to what Christ saith to them, though he be in the midst of them.

2. The Ninevites would rise up in judgment against them, and condemn their impenitency, ver. 32. They repented at the preaching of Jonas, but here is preaching which far exceeds that of Jonas, is more powerful and awakening; and threatens a much sorer ruin than that of Nineveh, and yet none are startled by it to turn from their evil way, as the Ninevites did.

2. He shews what is the *sign* that God *expects* from us for the evidencing of our faith; and that is the serious practice of that religion which we profess to believe, and a readiness to entertain all divine truths, when brought to us in their proper evidence. Now observe,

1. That they had the *light* with all the advantage they could desire: For God having *lighted the candle* of the gospel, did not put it in a *secret place*, or under a bushel; Christ did not preach in corners. The apostles were ordered to preach the gospel to every creature; and both Christ and his ministers, wisdom and her maidens cry in the *chief places of concourse*, ver. 33. It is a great privilege that the light of the gospel is put on a *candlestick*, so that all that come in may see it, and may see by it, where they are and whither they are going, and what is the true and sure and only way to happiness.

2. That having the *light*, their concern was to have the *sight*, or else to what purpose had they the light. Be the *object* never so clear if the *organ* be not *right*, we are never the better, ver. 34. *The light of the body is the eye*, which receives the light of the candle, when it is brought into the room: So the light of the soul is the understanding and judgment, and its power of discerning between good and evil, truth and falsehood. Now according as this is, accordingly the light of divine revelation is to us, and our benefit by it; accordingly it is a favour of life unto life, or of death unto death.

1. If this eye of the soul be *single*, if it see *clear*, see things as they are, and judge impartially concerning them, if it aim at *truth* only, and seek it for its own sake, and have not any sinister bye looks and intentions, the *whole body*, that is, the whole soul is *full of light*, it receives and entertains the gospel, which will bring along with it into the soul both *knowledge* and *joy*: this speaks the same thing with that of the good ground, *receiving the word and understanding it*. If our understanding admit the gospel in its full light, it fills the soul, and it has enough to *fill it*. And if the soul be thus *filled*

filled with the light of the gospel, having no part dark; if all its powers and faculties be subjected to the government and influence of the gospel, and none left unfunctioned, then the whole soul shall be full of light, full of holiness and comfort; it was darkness itself, but is now light in the Lord, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light, ver. 36. Note, The gospel will come into those souls whose doors and windows are thrown open to receive it, and where it comes it will bring light with it. But,

2. If the eye of the soul be evil, if the judgment be bribed and biased by the corrupt and vicious dispositions of the mind, by pride and envy, by the love of the world and sensual pleasures; if the understanding be prejudiced against divine truths, and resolved not to admit them though brought with never so convincing an evidence, it is no wonder that the whole body, the whole soul, is full of darkness, ver. 34. How can they have instruction, information, direction, or comfort from the gospel, that willfully shut their eyes against it, and what hope is there of such, what remedy for them? The inference from hence therefore is, ver. 35. Take heed that the light which is in thee be not darkness. Take heed that the eye of the mind be not blinded by partiality and prejudice, and sinful aims. Be sincere in your inquiries after truth, and ready to receive it in the light and love and power of it; and not as the men of this generation whom Christ preached to, that never sincerely desired to know God's will, or designed to do it, and therefore no wonder they walked on in darkness, wandered endlessly, and perished eternally.

37. ¶ And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in and sat down to meat. 38. And when the Pharisee saw it he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner. 39. And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter: but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. 40. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? 41. But rather give alms of such things as ye have: and behold, all things are clean unto you. 42. But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone. 43. Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets. 44. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them. 45. Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also. 46. And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. 47. Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. 48. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. 49. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: 50. That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; 51. From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation. 52. Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye enter not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered. 53. And as he said these things unto them, the Scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things: 54. Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

Christ here saith many of those things to a Pharisee and his guests in a private conversation at table, which he afterwards said in a public discourse in the temple, Matt. xxiii. for what he said in public and private was of a piece. He would not say that in a corner which he durst not repeat and stand to in the great congregation: nor would he give those reproofs to any sort of sinners in general, which he durst not apply to them in particular as he met with them, for he was and is the faithful witness. Here is,

First, Christ's going to dine with a Pharisee that very civilly invited him to his house, ver. 37. As he spake, even while he was speaking, a certain Pharisee interrupted him with a request to him to come and dine with him, to come forthwith, for it was dinner time. We are willing to hope the Pharisee was so well pleased with his discourse that he was willing to shew him respect and desirous to have more of his company, and therefore gave him this invitation and bid him truly welcome; and yet we have some cause to suspect that it was with an ill design to break off his discourse to the people, and to have an opportunity of ensnaring him and getting something out of him which might serve for matter of accusation or reproach, ver. 53, 54. We know not the mind of this Pharisee, but whatever it was Christ knew it, if he meant ill he shall know Christ doth not fear him, if well he shall know Christ is willing to do him good; so he went in and sat down to meat. Note, Christ's disciples must learn of him to be conversable and not morose. Though we have need to be cautious what company we keep, yet we need not be rigid, nor must we therefore go out of the world.

Secondly, The offence which the Pharisee took at Christ, as those of that sort had sometimes done at the disciples of Christ for not washing before dinner, ver. 38. He wondered that a man of his sanctity, a prophet,

a man of so much devotion, and such a strict conversation would sit down to meat and not first wash his hands, especially being newly come out of a mixt company, and there being in the Pharisee's dining room no doubt all accommodation set ready for it; so that he need not fear being troublesome; and the Pharisee himself and all his guests no doubt washing, so that he could not be singular, what, and yet not wash? what harm had it been if he had washed? Was it not strictly commanded by the canons of their church? It was so, and therefore Christ would not do it, because he would witness against their assuming a power to impose that as a matter of religion which God commanded them not. The ceremonial law consisted in divers washings, but this was none of them, and therefore Christ would not practise it, no, not in complaisance to the Pharisee who invited him, nor though he knew that offence would be taken at his omitting it.

Thirdly, The sharp reproofs which Christ upon this occasion gave to the Pharisees, without begging pardon even of the Pharisee whose guest he now was; for we must not flatter our best friends in any evil thing.

1. He reproves them for placing religion so much in those instances of it that are only external and fall under the eye of man, while those were not only postponed but quite expunged which respect the soul, and fall under the eye of God, ver. 39, 40. Now observe here, (1.) The absurdity they were guilty of. You Pharisees make clean the outside only, you wash your hands with water but do not wash your hearts from wickedness; those are full of covetousness and malice, covetousness of men's good and malice against good men. These would never be reckoned cleanly servants that wash only the outside of the cup their master drinks out of, or the platter he eats out of, and take no care to make the inside clean which immediately affects the meat and drink, and mingles it with it if there be any filth. The frame and temper of the mind in every religious service is the inside of the cup and platter, the impurity of that infects the services, and therefore to keep ourselves free from scandalous enormities, and yet to live under the dominion of spiritual wickedness is as great an affront to God, as it would be for a servant that gives the cup into his master's hand, clean wiped from all the dust on the outside but within full of cobwebs and spiders. Ravening and wickedness, that is reigning worldliness and reigning spitefulness, which men think they can find some cloak and cover for, are the dangerous damning sins of many who have made the outside of the cup clean from the more gross and scandalous and inexcusable sins of whoredom and drunkenness. (2.) A particular instance of the absurdity of it, ver. 40. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within also? Did not that God, who in the law of Moses appointed divers ceremonial washings with which you justify yourselves in these practices and impositions, appoint also that you should cleanse and purify your hearts? He who made laws for that which is without, did not he even in those laws further intend something within? and by other laws shew how little he regarded the purifying of the flesh, and the putting away of the filth of that if the heart be not made clean? or it may have regard to God, not only as a lawgiver but (which the words seem rather to import) as a Creator. Did not God who made us these bodies (and they are fearfully and wonderfully made) make us these souls also, which are more fearfully and wonderfully made; now if he made both he justly expects we should take care of both; and therefore not only wash the body which he is the former of, and make the hands clean in honour of his work, but wash the spirit which he is the Father of, and get the leprosy in the heart cleansed.

To this he subjoins a rule for making of our creature-comforts clean to us, ver. 41. Instead of washing your hands before you go to meat, give alms of such things as you have, to evilex, of such things as are set before you and present you with, let the poor have their share out of them, and then all things are clean to you and you may use them comfortably. Here is a plain allusion to the law of Moses, by which it was provided that certain portions of the increase of their land should be given to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and when that was done what was reserved for their own use was clean to them, and they could in faith pray for a blessing upon it, Deut. xxi. 12-15. Then we can with comfort enjoy the gifts of God's bounty ourselves, when we send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared, Neh. viii. 10. Job eat not his morsel alone, but the fatherless eat thereof, and so it was clean to him, Job xxxi. 17. clean, that is permitted and allowed to be used, and then only it can be used comfortably. Note, What we have is not our own, unless God have his dues out of it; and it is by liberality to the poor that we clear up to ourselves our liberty to make use of our creature-comforts.

2. He reproves them for laying stress upon trifles, and neglecting the weighty matters of the law, ver. 42. (1.) Those laws which related only to the means of religion they were very exact in the observance of, as particularly those concerning the maintenance of the priests, ye pay tithe of mint and rue, pay it in kind and to the full, and will not put off the priests with a modus decimandi or compound for it; by this they would gain a reputation with the people as strict observers of the law, and would make an interest in the priests in whose power it was many a time to do them a kindness; and no wonder if the priests and the Pharisees contrived how to strengthen one another's hands. Now Christ doth not condemn them for being so exact in paying tithes, these things ought ye to have done, but for thinking that that would atone for the neglect of their greater duties; for, (2.) Those laws which relate to the essentials of religion they made nothing of, ye pass over judgment and the love of God, you make no conscience of giving men their dues and God your hearts.

3. He reproves them for their pride and vanity, and affectation of pre-eminence and praise of men, ver. 43. Ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, or consistories where the elders met for government; if you have not those seats, you are ambitious of them; if you have, you are proud of them; and ye love greeting in the markets, to be complimented by the people and to have their cap and knee. It is not sitting uppermost or being greeted, that is reproved, but loving it.

4. He reproves them for their hypocrisy, and their colouring over the wickedness of their hearts and lives with specious pretences, ver. 44. Ye are as graves overgrown with grass, which therefore appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them, and so they contract the ceremonial pollution which by the law arose from the touch of a grave. These Pharisees were within full of abominations as a grace of putrefaction, full of covetousness, envy, and malice, and yet they concealed it so artfully with a profession of devotion, that it did not appear; so that they who conversed with them and followed their doctrine were defiled with sin, infected with their corruption and ill morals, and yet they making a shew of piety, suspected no danger by them. The contagion insinuated itself and was insensibly caught, and those that caught it thought themselves never the worse.

Fourthly, The testimony which he bore also against the lawyers or scribes, who made it their business to expound the law according to the tradition of the elders, as the Pharisees did to observe the law according to that tradition.

1. There was one of that profession who re-entred what he said against the Pharisees, ver. 45. Master, thus saying, thou reproachest us also, for we are Scribes; and are we therefore hypocrites? Note, It is a common thing for

for unhumbled sinners to call and count reproaches reproaches. It is the wisdom of those that desire to have their sin mortified, to make a good use of reproaches that come from *ill will*, and to turn them into reproofs; if we can that way hear of our faults and amend them, it is well; but it is the folly of those who are wedded to their sins and resolved, not to part with them, to make an *ill use* of the faithful and friendly admonitions given them which come from love, and to have their passions provoked by them as if they were intended for reproaches, and therefore fly in the face of their reprovers, and justify themselves in rejecting the reproof. Thus the prophet complained, *Jer. vi. 10. The word of the Lord is to them a reproach; they have no delight in it.* This lawyer espoused the Pharisee's cause, and so made himself partaker of his sins.

2. Our Lord Jesus thereupon took them to task, *ver. 46. Woe unto you also, ye lawyers; and again, ver. 52. Woe unto you lawyers.* They blessed themselves in the reputation they had among the people, who thought them happy men, because they studied the law, and were always conversant with that, and had the honour of instructing the people in the knowledge of that, but Christ denounced *woes* against them, for he sees not as a man sees. This was just upon him for taking the Pharisees' part, and quarrelling with Christ because he reproved them. Note, Those who quarrel with the reproofs of others, and suspect them to be reproaches to them, do but get *woes of their own* by so doing.

1. The lawyers are reproved for making the services of religion more burdensome to others, but more *easy* to themselves, than God had made them, *ver. 46. Ye lay men with burdens grievous to be borne*, by your traditions, which bind them out from many liberties God has allowed them, and bind them up to many slaveries, which God never enjoined them, to shew your authority, and to keep people in awe; but *ye yourselves touch them not with one of your fingers, i. e. (1.)* You will not burden yourselves with them nor be yourselves bound by those restraints with which you hamper others. They would seem by the hedges they pretended to make about the law to be very strict for the observance of the law, but if you could see their practices, you would find not only that they make nothing of those hedges themselves, but make nothing of the law itself; neither; thus the confessors of the Romish church are said to do with their penitents. (2.) You will not lighten them to those you have power over; *ye will not touch them*, that is either to repeal them or to dispense with them, when you find them to be burthenome and grievous to the people. They would come in with both hands to dispense with a command of God, but not with a finger to mitigate the rigour of any of the traditions of the elders.

2. They are reproved for pretending a veneration for the memory of the prophets whom their fathers killed, when yet they hated and persecuted those in their own day who were sent to them on the same errand, to call them to repentance and direct them to Christ, *ver. 47, 48, 49.*

(1.) These hypocrites among other pretences of piety built the sepulchres of the prophets, i. e. They erected monuments over their graves in honour of them, probably with large inscriptions containing high encomiums of them; they were not so superstitious as to enshrine their relics, or to think the devotions the more acceptable to God for their being paid at the tombs of the martyrs: they did not burn incense or pray to them, or plead their merits with God; they did not add that iniquity to their hypocrisy, but as if they owned themselves the children of the prophets, their heirs and executors, they repaired and beautified their monuments sacred to their pious memory.

(2.) Notwithstanding this they had an inveterate enmity to those in their own day that came to them in the spirit and power of those prophets, and though they had not yet had an opportunity of carrying it far, yet they would soon do it, for the wisdom of God said, i. e. Christ himself would so order it, and did now foretell it, that they would *slay and persecute* the prophets and apostles that should be sent them: The wisdom of God would thus make trial of them and discover their odious hypocrisy, by sending them prophets to reprove them for their sins, and warn them of the judgments of God. Those prophets should prove themselves apostles or messengers sent from heaven by signs and wonders and gifts of the Holy Ghost: or I will send them prophets under the title and title of apostles, who yet shall produce as good an authority as any of the old prophets did; and those they shall not only contradict and oppose but *slay and persecute*, and put to death. Christ foretold this, and yet did not otherwise than as became the wisdom of God in sending them, for he knew how to bring glory to himself in the issue, by the recompences reserved both for the persecutors and the persecuted in the future state.

(3.) That therefore God will justly put another construction upon their building the tombs of the prophets than what they would be thought to intend, and it shall be interpreted their *allowing the deeds of their fathers*, *ver. 45.* for since by their present actions it appeared they had no true value for their prophets, their building their sepulchres shall have this sense put upon it, that they resolved to keep them in their graves whom their fathers had hurried thither, Josiah that had a real value for prophets, thought it enough not to disturb the grave of the man of God at Bethel, let no man move his bones, 2 Kings xxiii. 17, 18. If these lawyers will carry the matter further, and will build their sepulchres, it is such a piece of over-doing as gives cause to suspect an ill design in it, and that it is meant as a cover for some design against prophecy itself, like the kiss of a traitor, as he that blessed his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him, Prov. xxvii. 14.

(4.) That they must expect no other but to be reckoned with as the fillers up of the measure of persecution, *ver. 50, 51.* They keep up the trade as it were in succession, and therefore are responsible for the debts of the company, even those it has been in contracting all along from the blood of Abel when the world began, to that of Zecharias, and so forward to the end of the Jewish state, it shall all be required of this generation, this last generation of the Jews, whose sin in persecuting Christ's apostles would exceed any of the sins of that kind that their fathers were guilty of, and so would bring wrath upon them to the uttermost, 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16. And their destruction by the Romans was so terrible as might well be reckoned they completing of God's vengeance upon that persecuting nation.

3. They are reproved for opposing the gospel of Christ and doing all they could to oppose the progress and success of it, *ver. 52.* (1.) They had not according to the duty of their place faithfully expounded to the people those scriptures of the Old Testament which pointed at the Messiah, which if they had been led into the right understanding of by the lawyers they would readily have embraced him and his doctrine; but instead of that they had perverted those texts, and had cast a mist before the eyes of the people, by their corrupt glosses upon them, and this is called *taking away the key of knowledge*: instead of using that key for the people, and helping them to use it aright; they hid it from them; this is called in Matthew *shutting up the kingdom of God against men*, Matt. xxiii. 13. Note, Those who take away the key of knowledge shut up the kingdom of heaven. (2.) They themselves did not embrace the gospel of Christ, though by their acquaintance with the Old Testament they could not but know that the time was fulfilled; and the kingdom of God was at hand; they saw the prophecies

accomplished in that kingdom which our Lord Jesus was about to set up, and yet would not themselves enter into it. Nay, (3.) Them that without any conduct or assistance of theirs were entering in they did all they could to hinder and discourage, by threatening to cast them out of the synagogue, and otherwise terrifying them. It is bad for people to be *averse* to revelation, but much worse to be *adverse* to it.

Lastly, In the close of the chapter we are told how spitefully and maliciously the Scribes and Pharisees contrived to draw him into a snare, *ver. 53, 54.* They could not bear those cutting reproofs which they must own to be just; but since what he had said against them in particular would not bear an action, nor could they ground upon it any criminal accusation, and therefore as if because his reproofs were warm, they hoped to stir him up to some intemperate heat and passion so as to put him off his guard; they began to urge him *vehemently*, to be very fierce upon him, and to provoke him to speak of many things, to propose dangerous questions to him, laying wait for something which might serve the design they had of making him either odious to the people, or obnoxious to the government, or both. Thus did they seek occasion against him, like David's enemies that did every day wrest his words, Psalm lvi. 5. *Evil men dig up mischief.* Note, Faithful reprovers of sin must expect to have many enemies, and have need to set a watch before the door of their lips because of their observers that watch for their halting. The prophet complains of those in his time who make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth him in the gate, Isa. xxix. 21. That we may bear trials of this kind with patience, and get through them with prudence, let us consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself.

C H A P. XII.

In this chapter we have divers excellent discourses of our Saviour's upon various occasions; many of which are to the same purpose with what we had in Matthew upon other like occasions; for we may suppose our Lord Jesus preached the same doctrine, and pressed the same duties at several times in several companies, and one of the Evangelists took them as he delivered them at one time, and another at another time; and we need thus to have precept upon precept; line upon line. Here, (1.) Christ warns his disciples to take heed of hypocrisy, and of cowardice in professing Christianity and preaching the Gospel, *ver. 1—12.* (2.) He gives a caution against covetousness, upon occasion of a covetous motion made to him, and illustrates that caution by a parable of a rich man suddenly cut off by death in the midst of his worldly projects and hopes, *ver. 13—21.* (3.) He encourageth his disciples to cast all their care upon God, and to live easy in a dependence upon his providence, and engageth them to make religion their main business, *ver. 22—34.* (4.) He stirs them up to watchfulness for their Master's coming, from the consideration of the reward of those who are then found faithful, and the punishment of those who are then found unfaithful, *ver. 35—48.* (5.) He bids them expect trouble and persecution, *ver. 49—53.* (6.) He warns the people to observe and improve the day of their opportunities, and to make their peace with God in time, *ver. 54—59.*

1. **I**N the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, in so much that they trod one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. 2. For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed: neither hid that shall not be known. 3. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops. 4. And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed the body, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. 6. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? 7. But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows. 8. Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess before the angels of God. 9. But he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God. 10. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven. 11. And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: 12. For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

We find here, 1. A vast auditory that was got together to hear Christ preach. The Scribes and Pharisees sought to accuse him, and do him mischief, but the people that were not under the bias of their prejudices and jealousies, still admired him, attended on him, and did him honour, *ver. 1.* In the mean time, while he was in the Pharisee's house, contending with them that sought to entangle him, the people got together for an afternoon sermon; a sermon after dinner, after dinner with a Pharisee; and he would not disappoint them. Though in the morning sermon, when they were gathered thick together, chap. xi. 29. he had severely reprov'd them; as an evil generation that seek a sign, yet they renewed their attendance on him, so much better could the people bear their reproofs, than the Pharisees their. The more the Pharisees strove to drive the people from Christ, the more flocking there was to him. Here was an innumerable multitude of people gathered together, so that they trod one upon another in labouring to get foremost, and to come within hearing. It is a good sight to see people thus forward to hear the word, and venture upon inconvenience and danger, rather than miss an opportunity for their souls. Who are these that thus fly

like the doves to their windows? Isa. lx. 8. When the net is cast where there is such a multitude of fish, it may be hoped that some may be inclosed.

2. The instructions which he gave his followers in the hearing of this auditory.

First, He began with a caution against *hypocrisy*. This he said to his disciples *first of all*; either to the twelve or the seventy. These were his more peculiar charge, his family, his school, and therefore he particularly *warned them* as his *beloved sons*; they made more a profession of religion than others, and hypocrisy in *that* was the sin they were most in danger of. They were to preach to others, and if they *prevaricate*, corrupt the word, and deal deceitfully, hypocrisy would be worse in them than in others. And besides, there was a Judas among them that was an hypocrite, and Christ knew it, and would hereby startle him, or leave him inexcusable. Christ's disciples were, for aught we know, the *best men* then in the world, yet needed to be cautioned against hypocrisy. Christ said this to the disciples *in the hearing* of this great multitude, rather than *privately* when he had them by themselves to add the greater weight to the caution, and to let the world know that he would not countenance hypocrisy, no, not in *his own disciples*. Now observe,

1. The description of that sin which he warns them against, *Is the leaven of the Pharisees*. (1.) It is *leaven*, it is *spreading* as leaven, *insinuates* itself into the whole man, and all that he doeth; it is *swelling* and *souring* as leaven, for it puffs men up with pride, and imbibers them with malice, and makes their service unacceptable to God. (2.) It is the leaven of the Pharisees, i. e. it is the sin they are most of them found in. Take heed of imitating them; be not you of their spirit; do not you assemble in Christianity as they do in Judaism; make not your religion a *cloak of maliciousness*, as they do theirs.

2. A good reason against it, *ver. 2, 3*. For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed. It is to no purpose to dissemble, for sooner or later truth will come out; and a *lying tongue is but for a moment*. If you *speak in darkness* that which is unbecoming you, and is inconsistent with your public professions, it shall be heard in the light, some way or other it shall be discovered, *a bird of the air shall carry the voice*, Eccles. x. 20. and your folly and falsehood will be made manifest. The iniquity that is concealed with a shew of piety will be discovered, perhaps in this world, as Judas's was and Simon Magus's, however, in the great day, when the *secrets of all hearts* shall be made manifest, Eccles. xii. 14. Rom. ii. 16. If men's religion prevail not to conquer and cure the wickedness of their hearts, it shall not always serve for a cloak. The day is coming when hypocrites will be stripped of their fig-leaves.

Secondly, To this he added a charge to them, to be faithful to the trust reposed in them, and not to betray it through cowardice or base fear. Some make, *ver. 2, 3*, to be a caution to them not to conceal those things which they had been *instructed* in, and were *employed* to publish to the world. Whether men will *hear*, or whether they will *forebear*, tell them the truth; the whole truth, and *nothing but the truth*; what has been spoken to you, and you have talked of among yourselves *privately* and in corners, that do you preach *publicly*, whoever is offended; but if you *please men* you are not Christ's servants, nor can you please him, Gal. i. 10.

But this was not the worst of it; it was likely to be a *suffering* cause, though never a *sinking* one; let them therefore arm themselves with courage, and divers arguments here are to steel them with a holy resolution in their work. Consider,

1. The power of your enemies is a limited power, *ver. 4*. I say unto you, my friends; Christ's disciples are his friends, he calls them *friends*, and gives them this friendly advice, *Be not afraid*; do not disquiet yourselves with tormenting fears of the power and rage of men. Note, Those whom Christ owns for his friends need not be afraid of any enemies. *Be not afraid*, not of them that *kill the body*, let it not be in the power, not only not of *scoffers*, but not of *murderers*, to drive you off from your work, for you that have learned to triumph over death may say, even of them, let them do their worst, *after that there is no more that they can do*; the immortal soul lives and is happy, and enjoys itself and its God, and sets them all at defiance. Note, Those can do Christ's disciples no real harm, and therefore ought not to be dreaded, who can but *kill the body*, for they only send that to its rest, and the soul to its joy the sooner.

2. God is to be feared more than the most powerful men, *ver. 5*. I will forewarn you whom you shall fear; that you may fear man less, fear God more; Moses conquers his fear of the *wrath of the king*, by having an eye to him that is *invisible*. By owning Christ you may incur the wrath of men, which can reach no further than to *put you to death*, and without God's permission they cannot do that; but by denying Christ and disowning him, you will incur the wrath of God, which has power to send you to *hell*, and there is no resisting it; now of two evils the least is to be chosen, and the greatest to be dreaded, and therefore I say unto you, *fear him*. It is true, said that blessed martyr, Bishop Hooper, life is sweet, and death bitter, but eternal life is more sweet, and eternal death more bitter.

3. The lives of good Christians and good ministers are the particular care of the divine providence, *ver. 6, 7*. To encourage us in times of difficulty and danger, we must have recourse to our first principles, and build upon them; now a firm belief of the doctrine of God's universal providence, and the extent of it would be satisfying to us, when at any time we are in peril, and encourage us to trust God in the way of duty. (1.) Providence takes cognizance of the *meanest creatures*, even of the *sparrows*. Though they are of such small account that five of them are sold for two farthings, yet not one of them is forgotten of God, but is provided for, and notice is taken of its death. Now, *ye are of more value than many sparrows* and therefore you may be sure you are not forgotten, though imprisoned, though banished, though forgotten by your friends; much more precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of *joints* than the death of sparrows. (2.) Providence takes cognizance of the *meanest interests* on the disciples of Christ, *ver. 7*. even the *very hairs of your head are numbered*, much more are your signs and tears numbered, and the drops of your blood you shed for Christ's name sake. An account is kept of all your losses, that they may be, and without doubt they shall be, recompensed unpeakably to your advantage.

4. You will be owned or disowned by Christ in the great day, according as you now own or disown him, *ver. 8, 9*. (1.) To engage us to *confess Christ before men*, whatever else we may lose or suffer for our constancy to him, and how dear soever it may cost us, we are assured, that they who confess Christ now, shall be owned by him in the great day *before the angels of God*, to their everlasting comfort and honour. Jesus Christ will confess not only that he suffered for them, and they are to have the benefit of his sufferings, but that they suffered *for him*; and his kingdom and interest on earth was advanced by their sufferings; and what greater honour can be done them? (2.) To deter us from *denying Christ*, and a cowardly deserting of his truths and ways, we are here assured, that those who *deny Christ*, and treacherously depart from him, whatever they may save by it, though it were a kingdom, will be vast losers at last, for they shall be *denied before the angels of God*; Christ will not know them; will not own them; will not shew them any favour, which will turn to their everlasting terror and con-

tempt. By the fires here laid upon their being *confessed* or *denied before the angels of God*, it should seem to be a considerable part of the happiness of glorified saints, that they will not only stand *right*, but stand *high* in the esteem of the *holy angels*; they will love them and honour them, and own them, if they be Christ's servants, they are their fellow-servants, and they will take them for their companions: And on the contrary a considerable part of the misery of damned sinners will be, that the holy angels will abandon them, and will be the pleased witnesses not only of their disgrace as here, but of their misery, for they shall be *tormented in the presence of the holy angels*, Rev. ix. 10. who will give them no relief.

5. The errand they were shortly to be sent out upon, was of the highest and last importance to the children of men, to whom they were sent, *ver. 10*. Let them be bold in preaching the gospel, for a sorer and heavier doom would attend those that rejected them, after the Spirit was poured out upon them, which was to be the *last* method of conviction, than those that now rejected Christ himself and opposed him. *Greater works than these shall ye do*; and consequently greater will be the punishment of those that blaspheme the gifts and operations of the Holy Ghost in you. *Whoever shall speak a word against the Son of man*, that shall stumble at the meanness of his appearance, and speak *slightly* and *spitefully* of him, it is capable of some excuse; *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*. But unto him that *blasphemeth the Holy Ghost*, that blasphemes the Christian doctrine, and maliciously opposeth it, after the pouring out of the Spirit, and his attestation of Christ's *being glorified*, Acts ii. 33—v. 32. the privilege of the *forgiveness of sins* shall be denied, he shall have no benefit by Christ and his gospel; you may shake off the dust of your feet against those that do so, and give them over as incurable: They have forfeited that *repentance* and *remission* which Christ was *excited to give*, and which you are *commissioned to preach*. The sin no doubt was the more daring, and consequently the case more desperate, during the continuance of the extraordinary gifts and operations of the Spirit in the church, which were intended for a *sign to them who believed not*, 1 Cor. xiv. 22. Those who, though they were not convinced by them at first, yet admired them, there were hopes of, but those who blasphemed them were given over.

6. Whatever trials they should be called out to, they should be sufficiently furnished for them; and honourably brought through them, *ver. 11, 12*. The faithful martyr for Christ has not only sufferings to undergo, but a testimony to bear, a good confession to witness, and is concerned to do that well, so as that the cause of Christ may not suffer, though he suffer for it: And if this be his care, let him cast it upon God, when they *bring you into the synagogues*, before church-rulers, before the Jewish courts, or before *magistrates and powers*: Gentile rulers, rulers in the state to be examined about your doctrine, what it is, and what the proof of it; *Take no thought what ye shall answer*, (1.) That you may *save yourselves*; do not study by what art or rhetoric to mollify your judges, or by what tricks in law to bring yourselves off; if it be the will of God that you should come off, and your time is not yet come, he will bring it about effectually. (2.) That you may *serve your master*; aim at this, but do not perplex yourselves about it, for the *Holy Ghost*, as a Spirit of wisdom, *shall teach you what you ought to say*, and how to say it, so as it may be for the honour of God and his cause.

13. ¶ And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. 14. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? 15. And he said unto them, Take heed and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth: 16. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17. And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? 18. And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater: and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. 19. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 20. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? 21. So is he that layeth up a treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.

We have in these verses,

First, The application that was made to Christ very unseasonably by one of his hearers, desiring him to *interpose between him and his brother*, in a matter that concerned the estate of the family, *ver. 9*. *Master speak to my brother*; speak as a prophet, speak as a king, speak with authority, he is one that will have regard to what thou sayest; speak to him *that he divide the inheritance with me*. Now,

1. Some think his brother *did him wrong*, and he appeals to Christ to *right him*, because he knew the law was costly. His brother was such a one as the Jews called Ben-hamelec; a *son of violence*, that took not only his own part of the estate, but his brother's too, and forcible detained it from him. Such brethren there are in the world, that have no sense at all either of *natural equity* or *natural affection*, who make a prey of those whom they ought to patronize and protect. They who are so wronged, have a God to go to, who will execute judgment and justice for *those that are oppressed*.

2. Others think he had a mind to *do his brother wrong*, and would have Christ to assist him; that whereas the law gave the elder brother a double portion of the estate, and the father himself could not dispose of what he had but by that rule, *Deut. xxi. 16, 17*. he would have Christ to *alter that law*, and to oblige his brother, who perhaps was a follower of Christ at large, to *divide the inheritance equally with him*, in gavel-kind, share and share alike, and to allot him as much as his elder brother, I suspect that this was the case, because Christ takes occasion from it to warn against *covetousness*, *πλεονεξία*, a desire of *having more*, more than God in his providence has allotted us. It was not a lawful desire of getting his own, but a *sinful* desire of getting more than his own.

Secondly, Christ's refusal to interpose in this matter, *ver. 14*. *Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?* In matters of this nature, Christ would not assume either a *legislative* power to alter the settled rule of inheritances, or a *judicial* power to determine controversies concerning them; he could have done the judge's part, and the lawyer's as well as he did the physician's,

physician's and have ended suits at law as happily as he did diseases, but he would not, for it was not in his commission, *who made me a judge?* Probable he refers to the indignity done to Moses by his brethren in Egypt, which Stephen upbraided the Jews with, *Acts* vii. 27-35. If I should offer to do this, you would taunt me as you did Moses, *Who made thee a judge, or a divider?* He corrects the man's mistake, will not admit his appeal, it was *coram non judice*, and so *dismisseth* his bill. If he had come to him to desire him to assist his pursuits of the heavenly inheritance, Christ would have given him his best help, but as to this matter he has nothing to do, *who made me a judge?* Note, Jesus Christ was no usurper, he took no honour, no power to himself but what was given him, *Heb.* v. 5. Whatever he did he could tell by what authority he did it, and who gave him that authority.

Now this shews us what is the nature and constitution of Christ's kingdom; it is a spiritual kingdom, and not of this world. (1.) It doth not interfere with civil powers, nor take the authority of princes out of their hands; Christianity leaves the matter as it found it, as to civil power. (2.) It doth not intermeddle with civil rights, it obligeth all to do justly, according to the settled rules of equity, but dominion is not founded in grace. (3.) It doth not encourage our expectation of worldly advantages by our religion. If this man will be a disciple of Christ, and expects that in consideration of that Christ should give him his brother's estate, he is mistaken: the reward of Christ's disciples are of another nature. (4.) It doth not encourage our contests with our brethren, and our being rigorous and high in our demands, but rather for peace sake to recede from our right. (5.) It doth not allow ministers to entangle themselves in the affairs of this life, *2 Tim.* iii. 4: *to leave the word of God to serve tables.* There are those whose business it is, let it be left to them, *Tractant, fabrilis fabri.*

Thirdly, the necessary caution which Christ took occasion from hence to give to his hearers. Though he came not to be a divider of men's estates, he came to be a director of their consciences about them, and would have all take heed of harbouring that corrupt principle which they saw to be in others the root of so much evil. Here is,

1. The caution itself, *ver.* 15. *Take heed and beware of covetousness, observe yourselves,* keep a *jealous eye* upon your own hearts, lest covetous principles steal into them, and *εὐλασέσθαι, preserve yourselves,* keep a *strict hand* upon your own hearts, lest covetous principles rule and give law in them. Covetousness is a sin which we have need constantly to watch against, and therefore frequently to be warned against.

2. The reason of it, or an argument to enforce this caution: For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth, i. e. Our happiness and comfort doth not depend upon our having a great deal of the wealth of this world. (1.) The life of the soul to be sure doth not depend upon it, and the soul is the man. The things of the world will not suit the nature of a soul nor supply its needs, nor satisfy its desires, nor last so long as it will last. Nay, (2.) Even the life of the body and the happiness of that doth not consist in an abundance of these things, for many live very contentedly and easily, and yet through the world very comfortably, that have but a little of the wealth of it; a dinner of herbs with holy love is better than a feast of fat things: And on the other hand many live very miserably that have a great deal of the things of this world, they possess abundance and yet have no comfort of it; they *berceive their souls of good*, *Ecc.* iv. 1. Many that have abundance are discontented and fretting, as Ahab and Haman, and then what good doth their abundance do them?

3. The illustration of this by a parable: The sum of which is to shew the folly of carnal worldlings while they live, and their misery when they die, which is intended not only for a check to that man who came to Christ with an address about his estate, while he was in no care about his soul and another world, but for the enforcing of that necessary caution to us all to take heed of covetousness. The parable gives us the life and death of a rich man, and leaves us to judge whether he was a happy man.

1. Here is an account of his worldly wealth and abundance, *ver.* 16. *The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully,* *εὐρωα, regio.* He had a whole country to himself, a lordship of his own; he was a little prince. Observe, His wealth lay much in the fruits of the earth, for *the king himself is served of the field*, *Ecc.* i. 9. He had a great deal of ground, and his ground was fruitful; much would have more, and he had more. Note, The fruitfulness of the earth is a great blessing, but it is a blessing which God often gives plentifully to wicked men to whom it is a snare, that we may not think to judge of his love or hatred by what is before us.

2. Here are the workings of his heart in the midst of this abundance. We are here told what he thought within himself, *ver.* 17. Note, The God of heaven knows and observes whatever we think within ourselves, and we are accountable to him for it: He is both a discernor and judge of the thoughts and intents of the heart. We mistake if we imagine thoughts are hid, and thoughts are free.

Let us here observe,

1. What his cares and concerns were. When he saw an extraordinary crop upon his ground, instead of thanking God for it, or rejoicing in the opportunity it would give him of doing the more good, he afflicts himself with this thought, *what shall I do because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?* He speaks as one at a loss and full of perplexity, *What shall I do now?* The poorest beggar in the country that did not know where to have a meal's meat could not have said a more anxious word. Disquieting care is the common fruit of an abundance of this world, and the common fault of those that have abundance. The more men have the more perplexity they have with it, and the more solicitous they are to keep what they have and to add to it, how to spare and how to spend; so that even the abundance of the rich will not suffer them to sleep, for thinking what they shall do with what they have, and how they shall dispose of it. The rich man seems to speak it with a sigh, *What shall I do?* And if you ask, why, what is the matter? Truly he has abundance of wealth and wants a place to put it in, that is all.

2. What his projects and purposes were, which were the result of his cares, and were indeed absurd and foolish like them, *ver.* 18. *This will I do,* and it is the wisest course I can take; *I will pull down my barns,* for they are too little, and *I will build greater,* and *there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods,* and then I shall be at ease. Now here, (1.) It was folly for him to call the fruits of the ground his fruits and his goods; he seems to lay a pleasing emphasis upon that, *my fruits, and my goods;* whereas what we have is but lent us for our use, the property is still in God; we are but stewards of our Lord's goods, tenants at will of our Lord's land. It is *my corn* (saith God) and *my wine*, *Hos.* li. 8, 9. (2.) It was folly for him to hoard up what he had, and then to think it well bestowed. There will I bestow it all; as if none must be bestowed upon the poor, none upon his family, none upon the Levite and the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, but all in the great barn. (3.) It was folly for him to let his mind rise with his condition, when his ground brought forth more plentifully than usual, then to talk of bigger barns, as if the next year must needs be as fruitful as this, and much more abundant, whereas the barn might be as much too big the next year as it was too little this: Years of famine commonly follow years of plenty, as they did in Egypt: and therefore he had better to have

stacked some of his corn this once. (4.) It was folly for him to think to ease his care by building new barns, for the building of them would but increase his care, those know that who know any thing of the spirit of building: The way that God prescribes for the cure of inordinate care is certainly successful, but the way of the world doth but increase it. And besides when he had done this there were other cares would still attend him; the greater the barns still the greater the cares, *Ecc.* v. 10. (5.) It was folly for him to contrive and resolve all this *absolutely and without reserve.* This *I will do, I will pull down my barns and I will build greater, yea that I will,* without so much as that necessary proviso, *If the Lord will, I shall live*, *Jam.* iv. 13, 14. Peremptory projects are foolish projects, for our times are in God's hand and not in our own: and we do not so much as know what shall be on the morrow.

2. What his pleasing hopes and expectations were when he had made good those projects: *Then I will say to my soul,* upon the credit of this security, whether God say it or no, *Soul,* mark what I say, *thou hast much goods laid up for many years in these barns:* Now take thine ease, enjoy thyself, eat, drink, and be merry, *ver.* 19. and here also appears his folly, as much in the enjoyment of his wealth as in the pursuit of it. (1.) It was folly for him to put off his comfort in his abundance, till he had compassed his projects concerning it. When he has built bigger barns and filled them, which will be a work of time, then he will take his ease, and might he not as well have done that now? Grotius here quotes the story of Pyrrhus that was projecting to make himself master of Sicily, Africa, and other places in the prosecution of his victories; well, saith his friend Cyneas, and what must we do then; *Posica vivimus,* saith he; *Then we will live;* at *hoc jam licet,* saith Cyneas, *we may live now* if we please. (2.) It was folly for him to be confident that his goods were laid up for many years, as if his bigger barns would be safer than those he had; whereas in an hour's time they might be burnt to the ground, perhaps by lightning, which there is no defence against, and all that was laid up in them. A few years may make a great change; *moth and rust may corrupt, or thieves brake through and steal.* (3.) It was folly for him to count upon certain ease when he had laid up abundance of the wealth of this world, whereas there are many things that may make people uneasy in the midst of their greatest abundance: One dead fly may spoil a whole pot of precious ointment; and one thorn a whole bed of down. Pain and sickness of body, disagreeableness of relations, and especially a guilty conscience, may rob a man of his ease that has never so much of the wealth of this world. (4.) It was folly for him to think of making no other use of his plenty, but to eat and drink and to be merry; to indulge the flesh and gratify the sensual appetites without any thought of doing good to others, and being put thereby into a better capacity of serving God and his generation. As if we did live to eat and not eat to live, and the happiness of man consisted in nothing else but in having all the gratifications of sense wound up to the height of pleasurable. (5.) It was the greatest folly of all to say this to his soul. If he had said, *Body,* take thine ease, for *thou hast goods laid up for many years,* there had been sense in it; but the soul, considered as an immortal spirit, separable from the body, was no way interested in a barn full of corn, or a bag full of gold. If he had had the soul of a swine, he might have blessed it with the satisfaction of eating and drinking; but what is this to the soul of a man, that has exigences and desires which these things will be no ways suited to. It is the great absurdity which the children of this world are guilty of, that they portion their souls in the wealth of the world and the pleasures of sense.

3. Here is God's sentence upon all this, and we are sure that his judgment is according to truth. He said to himself, said to his soul, *Take ease;* and if God had said so too, the man had been happy, as his Spirit witnesseth with the spirit of believers to make them easy, but God said quite otherwise; and by his judgment of us we must stand or fall, not by ours of ourselves, *2 Cor.* x. His neighbours blessed him, *Psal.* x. 3. praised him as doing well for himself, *Psal.* xlv. 18. but God said he did ill for himself, *Thou fool; this night thy soul shall be required of thee,* *ver.* 20. God said to him, i. e. decreed this concerning him, and let him know it either by his conscience, or some awakening providence, or rather by both together. This was said when he was in the fulness of his sufficiency, *Job* xx. 22. when his eyes were held waking upon his bed with his cares and contrivances about enlarging his barns, not by adding a bay or two more of building to them, which might serve to answer the end, but by pulling them down and building greater, which was requisite to please his fancy: When he was forecaiting this and had brought it to an issue, and then lulled himself asleep again, with a pleasing dream of many years enjoyment of his present improvements, then God said this to him: Thus Belshazzar was struck with terror by the hand-writing on the wall in the midst of his jollity. Now observe what God said, (1.) The character he gave him, *Thou fool;* thou Nabal alluding to the story of Nabal, that fool; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him, whose heart was struck dead as a stone when he was regaling himself in the abundance of his provision for his sheep-shearers. Note, Carnal worldlings are fools, and the day is coming when God will call them by their own name, *thou fool,* and they will call themselves so. (2.) The sentence he passed upon him, a sentence of death; *This night thy soul shall be required of thee;* then shall require thy soul, to the words are, and then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? He thought he had goods that should be his many years, but he must part from them this night; he thought he should enjoy them himself, but he must leave them to he knows not who. Note, the death of carnal worldlings is miserable in itself and terrible to them.

1. It is a force, an arrest, it is the requiring of the soul, that soul that thou art making such a fool of; what hast thou to do with a soul that canst use it no better? Thy soul shall be required; that intimates that he is loth to part with it. A good man that has taken his heart off from this world cheerfully resigns his soul at death, and gives it up; but a worldly man has it torn from him with violence, it is a terror to him to think of leaving this world: *They shall require thy soul;* God shall require it, i. e. he shall require an account of it; man, woman, what hast thou done with thy soul? give an account of that stewardship. *They shall,* i. e. Evil angels, as the messengers of God's justice. As good angels receive gracious souls to carry them to their joy, so evil angels receive wicked souls to carry them to the place of torment; they shall require it as a guilty soul to be punished. The devil requires the soul as his own, for it did in effect give itself to him.

2. It is a surprise, an unexpected force. It is in the night, and terrors in the night are most terrible. The time of death is day-time to a good man, it is his morning; but it is night to a worldling, a dark night, he lies down in sorrow. It is, this night, this present night, without delay, there is no giving bail, or begging day; this pleasant night when thou art promising thyself many years to come, now thou must die and go to judgment; thou art entertaining thyself with the fancy of many a merry day and merry night, and merry feast, but in the midst of all, here is an end of all, *Isa.* xxi. 4.

3. It is the leaving of all those things behind which they have provided, which they have laboured for and prepared for hereafter with abundance of toil and care. All that which they have placed their happiness in, and built

built their hope upon, and raised their expectations from, they must leave behind: *Their pomp shall not descend after them*, Psal. xlv. 17. but they shall go as naked out of the world as they came into it, and they shall have no benefit at all by what they have hoarded up either in death, in judgment, or in their everlasting state.

4. It is leaving them to they *know not who*. Then *whose shall these things be?* Not *thine* to be sure, and thou knowest not what they will prove for whom thou didst design them, thy children and relations, whether they will be *wise or fools*, Eccl. ii. 18, 19. whether such as will bless thy memory or curse it, be a credit to thy family or a blemish; do good or hurt what thou leavest them, keep it or spend it; nay thou knowest not but those for whom thou dost design it may be prevented from the enjoyment of it, and it may be turned to some body else thou little thinkest of: Nay, though thou knowest to whom thou leavest it, thou knowest not to whom they will leave it, or into whose hand it will come at last. If many a man could have foreseen to whom his house would have come after his death, he would rather have burned it than beautified it.

5. It is a demonstration of his folly. Carnal wordlings are *fools* while they live; *this their way is their folly*, Psal. xlix. 13. but their folly is made most evident when they die, *at his end he shall be a fool*, Jer. xvii. 11. for then it will appear he took pains to lay up treasure in a world he was hastening from, but took no care to lay up treasure in a world he was hastening to.

Lastly, Here is the reddition of this parable, *ver. 21. so is he*, such a fool, a fool in God's judgment, a fool upon record, that *layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God*. This is the way and this is the end of such a man. Observe here,

1. The description of a worldly man. *He lays up treasure for himself*, for the body, for the world, for *himself* in opposition to God, for that *self* that is to be *denied*. (1.) It is his error that he counts his *flesh himself*, as if the body were the man. If *self* be rightly stated and understood, it is only the true Christian that lays up treasure for himself, and is *wise for himself*, Prov. ix. 12. (2.) It is his error that he makes it his business to *lay up for the flesh*, which he calls *laying up for himself*. All his labour is *for his mouth*, Eccl. vi. 7. *making provision for the flesh*. (3.) It is his error that he counts those things his *treasure* which are thus *laid up* for the world, and the body, and the life that now is; they are the wealth he trusts to and spends upon, and lets out his affections towards. (4.) The greatest error of all is that he is in *no care to be rich towards God*, rich in the account of God, whose accounting us rich makes us so, Rev. ii. 9. rich in the things of God, rich in *faith*, Jam. ii. 5. rich in *good works*, in the fruits of *righteousness*, 1 Tim. vi. 18. rich in graces and comforts and spiritual gifts. Many that have abundance of this world are wholly destitute of that which will enrich their souls, which will make them rich towards God, rich for eternity.

2. The folly and misery of a worldly man, *so is he*. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who knows what the end of things will be, has here told us what his end will be. Note, It is the unspeakable folly of the most of men, to mind and pursue the wealth of this world more than the wealth of the other world, that which is for the body only, and for time, more than that which is for the soul and eternity.

22. ¶ And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. 23. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. 24. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse or barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? 25. And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? 26. If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? 27. Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not: and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 28. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? 29. And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. 30. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. 31. ¶ But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. 32. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. 34. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. 35. Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning: 36. And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. 37. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth to serve them. 38. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. 39. And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. 40. Be ye therefore ready also: for the son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

Our Lord Jesus is here inculcating some needful useful lessons upon his disciples, which he had before taught them, and had occasion afterwards to

press upon them; for they need to have *precept upon precept, and line upon line*: Therefore because there are so many that are ruined by covetousness, and an ordinate affection to the wealth of this world. I say unto you, my disciples, take heed of it: *Thou, O man of God, see these things as well as thou, O man of the world*, 1 Tim. vi. 11.

First, He chargeth them not to afflict themselves with disquieting perplexing cares about the necessary supports of life, *ver. 22. Take no thought for your life*. In the foregoing parable he had given us warning against that branch of covetousness which rich people are most in danger of, and that is a *sensual complacency* in the abundance of this world's goods. Now his disciples might think they were in no danger of that, for they had no plenty or variety to glory in; and therefore he here warns them against another branch of covetousness which they are most in temptation to that have but a little of this world, which was the case of his disciples at best, and much more now they had left all to follow Christ; and that was an *anxious solicitude* about the necessary supports of life. *Take no thought for your life*, either for the preservation of it if it be in danger, or for the provision that is to be made for it, either of food or clothing, *what ye shall eat, or what ye shall put on*. This is the caution he had largely insisted upon, Matt. vi. 25. &c. And the arguments here used are much the same, designed for our encouragement to cast all our care upon God, which is the *right way* to ease ourselves of it. Consider then,

1. God that has done the greater for us may be depended upon to do the lesser: He hath, without any care or forecast of our own, given us *life* and a *body*, and therefore we may cheerfully leave it to him to provide *meat* for the support of that life and *raiment* for the defence of that body.

2. God that provides for his inferior creatures may be depended upon to provide for good Christians. Trust God for *meat*, for he *feeds the ravens* *ver. 24. they neither sow nor reap*, they take neither care nor pains beforehand to provide for themselves, and yet they are *fed* and never perish for want: Now consider *how much better ye are than the fowls*, than the ravens, Trust God for clothing, for he clothes the lilies, *ver. 27, 28. they make no preparation for their own clothing, they toil not, they spin not*, the root in the ground is a naked thing and without ornament, and yet as the flower grows up it appears wonderfully *beautified*: Now, if God has so clothed the flowers which are fading perishing things, *shall he not much more clothe you with such clothing as is fit for you*; and with clothing suited to your nature as theirs is? When God fed Israel with *manna* in the wilderness, he also took care for their clothing; for though he did not furnish them with new clothes, yet (which came all to one) he provided that those they had should not *be old upon them*, Deut. viii. 4. Thus will he clothe his spiritual Israel, but then let not them be of *little faith*. Note, Our inordinate cares are owing to the weakness of our faith, for a powerful practical belief of the all-sufficiency of God, his covenant-relation to us as a Father, and especially his precious promises, relating both to this life and that to come, would be mighty through God, to the pulling down of the strongholds of these disquieting perplexing imaginations.

3. Our cares are fruitless and vain and insignificant, and therefore it is folly to indulge them; they will not gain us our wishes, and therefore ought not to hinder our repose, *ver. 25. Which of you by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? no, nor one inch; can add to his age one year? no, nor one hour*. Now if ye be not able to do that which is *least*, if it be not in your power to alter your stature, why should you perplex yourselves about other things that are as much out of your power, and about which it is as necessary that we refer ourselves to the providence of God? Note, as in our *stature*, so in our *state*; it is our wisdom to take it as it is, and make the best of it, for fretting and vexing, carping and caring will not mend it.

4. An inordinate solicitous pursuit of the things of this world, even necessary things, doth very ill become the disciples of Christ, *ver. 29, 30. Whatever others do, seek not what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; do not ye afflict yourselves with perplexing cares, nor weary yourselves with constant toils; do not you hurry hither and thither with inquiries what you shall eat or drink*, as David's enemies, that *wandered up and down for meat*, Psal. lix. 15. or as the eagle that *seeks the preys afar off*, Job xxxix. 29. Let not the disciples of Christ thus seek their food, but ask it of God day by day; let not them be of *doubtful mind*, *μη μετρωμενοι*. Be not as meteors in the air, that are blown hither and thither with every wind; do not like them *rise and fall*, but maintain a consistency with yourselves; be even and steady, and have your hearts fixed; *live not in careful suspense*; let not your minds be continually perplexed between hope and fear, ever upon the rack. Let not the children of God make themselves uneasy: For,

1. This is to make themselves like the children of this world; *all these things do the nations of the world seek after*, *ver. 30. They that take care for the body only, and not for the soul, for this world only, and not for the other, look no further than what they shall eat and drink; and having no all-sufficient God to seek to and confide in, they burden themselves with anxious cares about those things, but it ill becomes you to do so: You who are called out of the world, ought not to be thus conformed to the world, and to walk in the way of this people*, Isa. viii. 11, 12. When inordinate cares prevail over us, we should think what am I, a Christian or a heathen? Baptized or not baptized? If a Christian, if baptized, shall I rank myself with Gentiles; and join with them in their pursuits?

2. It is needless for them to disquiet themselves with care about the necessary supports of life; for they have a Father in heaven who doth and will take care for them. *Your Father knows that you have need of these things*, and considers it, and will supply your needs according to his riches and glory, for he is your Father, who made you subject to these necessities, and therefore will suit his compassion to them; *your Father who maintains you, educates you, and designs an inheritance for you, and therefore will take care that you want no good thing*.

3. They have better things to mind and pursue, *ver. 31. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God*, and mind that you my disciples, that are to *preach the kingdom of God*, let your hearts be upon your work, and your great care how to do that well, and that will effectually divert your thoughts from inordinate care about the things of the world. And let all that have souls to save, *seek the kingdom of God*, in which only they can be *safe*: Seek admission into it, seek advancement in it, seek the *kingdom of grace*, to be subjects in that; *kingdom of glory*, to be princes in that, and then *all these things shall be added to you*; mind the affairs of your souls with diligence and care, and then trust God with all your other affairs.

4. They have better things to expect and hope for, *ver. 32. Fear not, little flock*: For the banishing of inordinate cares it is necessary that fears should be suppressed, when we frighten ourselves with an apprehension of evil to come, we put ourselves upon the stretch of care how to avoid it, when after all perhaps it is but the creature of our imagination; therefore *fear not, little flock*, but *hope to the end*, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. This comfortable word we had not in Matthew; Note, 1. Christ's flock in this world is a *little flock*, his sheep are but few and feeble: The church is a vineyard, a garden, a small spot, compared with the wilderness of this world, as Israel, 1 Kings xx. 27. who were like two little flocks of kids, when the Syrians filled the country. 2. Though it be

be a little flock, quite over-numbered, and therefore being in danger of being overpowered by its enemies, yet it is the will of Christ that they should not be afraid. Fear not, little flock, but see yourself safe under the protection and conduct of the great and good shepherd, and lie easy. 3. God has a kingdom in store for all that belong to Christ's little flock; a crown of glory. 1 Pet. v. 4. a throne of power, Rev. iii. 21. unsearchable riches far exceeding the peculiar treasures of king and provinces. The sheep on the right hand are called to come and inherit the kingdom, it is theirs for ever; a kingdom for ever. 4. The kingdom is given according to the good pleasures of the Father: it is your Father's good pleasure it is given not of debt but of grace, free grace, sovereign grace, even so Father, because it seemed good unto thee: The kingdom is his, and may he not do what he will with his own? 5. The believing hope and prospects of the kingdom, should silence and suppress the fears of Christ's little flock in this world. Fear no trouble, for though it should come, it shall not come between you and the kingdom, that is life, it is near, that is not an evil worth trembling at the thought of which cannot separate us from the love of God. Fear not the want of any thing that is good for you, for if it be your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom, you need not question but he will hear your charges thither.

Secondly, he charged them to make sure work for their souls, by laying up their treasures in heaven, ver. 33. 34. And those who have done this may be very easy, as to all the events of time.

1. Sit loose to this world, and to all your possessions in it. Sell that ye have, and give alms, i. e. rather than want wherewith to relieve those that are truly necessitous sell that which you have superfluous, all that you can spare from the support of yourselves and families, and give it to the poor. Sell that ye have, if ye find it a hindrance from or incumbrance in the service of Christ. Do not think yourselves undone if by being fined, imprisoned, or banished for the testimony of Jesus, you be forced to sell your estates, though they be the inheritance of your fathers. Do not sell to hoard up the money, or because you can make more of it by usury, but sell and give alms; and what is given in alms, in a right manner, is put out to the best interest, upon the best security.

2. Set our hearts upon the other world, and your expectations from that world. Provide ourselves bags that wax not old, that wax not empty, not of gold but of grace in the heart, and good works in the life; these are bags that will last; grace will go with us into another world, for it is woven into the soul, and our good works will follow us, for God is not unrighteous to forget them. There will be treasures in heaven that will enrich us to eternity. (1.) It is a treasure that will not be exhausted: we may spend upon it to eternity, and it will not be at all the less; there is no danger of seeing the bottom of it. (2.) It is treasure that we are in no danger of being robbed of, for no thief approacheth near it; what is laid up in heaven is out of the reach of enemies. (3.) It is a treasure that will not spoil with keeping, no more than it will waste with spending, the moth doth not corrupt it, as it doth our garments we now wear. Now by this it doth appear that we have laid up our treasures in heaven, if our hearts be there, while we are here, ver. 34. If we think much of heaven and keep our eyes upon it, if we quicken ourselves with the hope of it, and keep ourselves in awe with the fear of falling short of it. But if your hearts be set upon the earth and the things of it, it is to be feared you have your treasure and portion in it, and are undone when you leave it.

Thirdly, he chargeth them to get ready, and to keep in readiness for Christ's coming, when all those who have laid up their treasure in heaven shall enter upon the enjoyment of it, ver. 35, 36.

1. Christ is our Master, and we are his servants, not only working servants, but waiting servants, servants that are to do him honour, in waiting on him and attending his nations, if any man serve me, let him follow me, follow the lamb whithersoever he goes; but that is not all, they must do him honour in waiting for him, and expecting his return. We must be as men that wait for their Lord, that sit up late while he stays out late, to be ready to receive him.

2. Christ our Master, though now gone from us, will return again, return from the wedding; from solemnizing the nuptials abroad, to complete them at home. Christ's servants are now in a state of expectation, looking for their master's glorious appearing, and doing every thing with an eye to that and in order to that. He will come to take cognizance of his servants, and that being a critical day, they shall either stay with him, or be turned out of doors, according as they are found in that day.

3. The time of our Master's return is uncertain; it will be in the night, it will be far in the night, when he has long deferred his coming; and when many have done looking for him; in the second watch, just before midnight, or in the third watch, next after midnight, ver. 38. His coming to us at our death is uncertain, and to many, it will be a great surprise; for ver. 40. The son of man cometh at an hour that ye think not, without giving notice beforehand. This speaks not only the uncertainty of the time of his coming, but the prevailing security of the greatest part of men that are unthinking, and altogether regardless of the notices given them, so that whenever he comes, it is in an hour that they think not.

4. That which he expects and requires from his servants is, that they be ready to open to him immediately whenever he comes, ver. 36. that is, that they be in a frame fit to receive him, or rather to be received by him; that they be found as his servants, in the posture that becomes them, with their loins girded about; alluding to servants that are ready to go where their master sends them, and do what their master bids them, having their long garments tucked up, which otherwise would hang about them and hinder them and their lights burning, with which to light their master into the house, and up to his chamber.

5. Those servants will be happy who are found ready and in a good frame when their Lord comes, ver. 37. Blessed are those servants, who after having waited long, continue in a waiting frame, until the hour that their Lord comes, and are then found awake, and aware of his first approach, of his first knock; and again, ver. 38. Blessed are those servants, for then will be the time of their preferment. And here is such an instance of honour done them, as is scarce to be found among men, he shall make them sit down to meat, and serve them; for the bridegroom to wait upon his bride at table, is not uncommon, but to wait upon his servants is not the manner of men; yet Jesus Christ was among his disciples as one that served; and did once, to shew his condescension, gird himself and serve them when he washed their feet, John xiii. 4, 5. and it signified the joy with which they shall be received into the other world by the Lord Jesus, who is gone before to prepare for them, and has told them that his Father will honour them, John xii. 26.

6. We are therefore kept at uncertainty concerning the precise time of his coming, that we may be always ready; for it is no thanks to a man to be ready for an attack, if he know beforehand just the time when it should be made; the good man of the house, if he had known what hour the thief would come, though he were never so careless a man, yet would have watched; and have frightened away the thieves, ver. 39. But we do not know at what hour the alarm will be given us, and therefore are concerned to watch at all times, and never to be off our guard, or this may intimate the miserable

case of those who are careless and unbelieving in this great matter. If the good man of the house had had notice of his danger of being robbed such a night, he would have sitten up and saved his house; but we have notice of the day of the Lord's coming as a thief in the night, to the confusion and ruin of all secure sinners, and yet do not thus watch. If men will take such care of their houses, O let us be thus wise for our souls; be ye therefore ready also, as ready as the good man of the house would be, if he knew what hour the thief would come.

41. ¶ Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? 42. And the Lord said, who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? 43. Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing. 44. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. 45. But, and if that servant say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men servants and maidens, and to eat and drink and to be drunken; 46. The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looked not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. 47. And that servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 48. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. 49. ¶ I am come to send fire on the earth: and what will I, if it be already kindled? 50. But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished? 51. Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: 52. For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. 53. The Father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

Here is, 1. Peter's question which he puts to Christ upon occasion of the foregoing parable, ver. 41. Lord speakest thou this parable to us that are thy constant followers, to us that are ministers, or also to all that come to be taught by thee, to all the hearers, and in them to all Christians? Peter was now, as often, spokesman for the disciples. We have reason to bless God that there are some such forward men, that have a gift of utterance, and let those that are such take heed of being proud. Now Peter desires Christ to explain himself, and to direct the arrow of the foregoing parable to the mark he intended. He calls it a parable, because it was not only figurative, but weighty, solid, and instructive. Lord, said Peter, was it intended for us or for all? To this Christ gives a direct answer, Mark xiii. 37. What I say unto you I say unto all. Yet here he seems to shew that the apostles were primarily concerned in it. Note, We are all concerned to take to ourselves what Christ in his word designs for us, and to enquire accordingly concerning it, speakest thou this to us? To me? Speak, Lord, for thy servant hears. Doth this word belong to me? Speak it to my heart.

2. Christ's reply to this question directed to Peter and the rest of the disciples. If what Christ had said before did not so peculiarly concern them, but in common with other Christians, who must all watch and pray for Christ's coming, as his servants; yet this that follows is peculiarly adapted to ministers who are the stewards in Christ's house: Now our Lord Jesus here tells them,

1. What was their duty as stewards, and what the trust committed to them. (1.) They are made rulers of God's household, under Christ, whose own the house is; ministers derive an authority from Christ to preach the gospel, and to administer the ordinances of Christ, and apply the seals of the covenant of grace. (2.) Their business is to give God's children and servants their portion of meat that which is proper for them, and allotted to them; conviction and comfort to those to whom they respectfully belong. *Suum cuique*. This is rightly to divide the word of truth, 2 Tim. ii. 15. (3.) To give it them in due season, at that time and in that way, as is most suitable to the temper and condition of those that are to be fed; a word in season to him that is weary. (4.) Herein they must approve themselves faithful and wise; faithful to their Master, by whom this great trust is reposed in them; and faithful to their fellow servants, for whose benefit they are put in trust; and wise to improve an opportunity of doing honour to their Master, and service in the family. Ministers must be both skilful and faithful.

2. What would be their happiness if they approve themselves faithful and wise, ver. 43. Blessed is that servant, (1.) That is doing and is not idle nor indulgent of his ease; even the rulers of the household must be doing and make themselves servants of all. (2.) That is so doing, doing as he should be, giving them their portion of meat, by public preaching and personal application. (3.) That is found so doing when his Lord comes; that perseveres to the end, notwithstanding the difficulties he may meet with in the way. Now his happiness is illustrated by the performance of a steward, that has approved himself within a lower and narrower degree of service, he shall be preferred to a larger and higher, ver. 44. He will make him ruler over all that he has, which was Joseph's preferment in Pharaoh's court. Note, Ministers that obtain preferment of the Lord to be faithful, shall obtain further mercy to be abundantly rewarded for their faithfulness in the day of the Lord.

3. What a dreadful reckoning there would be if they were treacherous and unfaithful, ver. 45, 46. If that servant begin to be quarrelsome and profane, he shall be called to an account and severely punished. We had all this before in Matthew, and therefore shall here only observe, (1.) Our

looking upon Christ's second coming as a thing at a distance, is the cause of all those irregularities which render the thought of it terrible to us: *He saith in his heart my Lord delays his coming.* Christ's patience is very often misinterpreted his delay, to the discouragement of his people, and the encouragement of his enemies. (2.) The persecutors of God's people are commonly abandoned to security and sensuality; *they beat their fellow servants, and then eat and drink with the drunken,* altogether unconcerned either at their own sin or their brethren's sufferings, as the king and Haman that *sat down to drink when the city Shushan was perplexed*: Thus they drank to drown the clamours of their own consciences, and baffle them, which otherwise would fly in their faces. (3.) Death and judgment will be very terrible to all wicked people, but especially to wicked ministers, it will be a surprise to them, *at an hour when they are not aware*, it will be the determining of them to endless misery, they shall be cut in sunder, and have their portion assigned them with the unbelievers.

4. What an aggravation it would be of their sin and punishment, that they knew their duty and did not do it, *ver. 47, 48.* For *that servant that knew his lord's will and did it not shall be beaten with many stripes*, shall fall under a sorer punishment, and *he that knew not, shall be beaten with few stripes*; his punishment shall, in consideration of that, be mitigated. Here seems to be an allusion to the law, which made a distinction between sins committed through ignorance, and presumptuous sins, *Lev. v. 15.* Numb. xv. 29, 30. As also to another law concerning the number of stripes given to a malefactor, to be according to the nature of the crime, *Deut. xxi. 2.* Now, (1.) Ignorance of our duty is an extenuation of sin. He that *knew not his lord's will*, through carelessness and neglect, and his not having such opportunities as some others had of coming to the knowledge of it, and *did things worthy of stripes*, he shall be beaten, because he might have known his duty better, but with few stripes; his ignorance excuseth in part, but not in whole. Thus through ignorance the Jews put Christ to death, *Acts iii. 17.* 1 Cor. ii. 8. and Christ pleaded that ignorance in their excuse, *they know not what they do.* (2.) The knowledge of our duty is an aggravation of our sin. *That servant that knew his lord's will*, and yet did his own will, shall be *beaten with many stripes*: God will justly inflict more upon him, for abusing the means of knowledge he offered him, which others would have made a better use of; and because it argues a great degree of wilfulness and contempt to sin against knowledge, of how much sorer punishment then shall they be thought worthy, besides the many stripes that their own consciences will give them? Son remember. Here is a good reason for this added, *to whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required*, especially when it is committed as a trust he is to account for. Those that have greater capacities of mind than others, more knowledge and learning, more acquainted and converse with the scriptures, to them much is given, and their account will be accordingly.

3. A further discourse concerning his own sufferings which he expected, and concerning the sufferings of his followers which he would have them also to live in expectation of, in general, *ver. 49.* *I come to send fire on the earth.* By which some understand the preaching of the gospel, and the pouring out of the Spirit, holy fire, this Christ came to send with a commission to refine the world, to purge away its dross, to burn up its chaff, and it was *already kindled*; the gospel was begun to be preached, some prefaces there were to the pouring out of the Spirit: Christ baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, this Spirit descended in fiery tongues; but by what follows, it seems rather to be understood of the fire of persecution; Christ is not the author of it, as it is the sin of the incendiaries, the persecutors; but he permits it, nay he commissions it as a refining fire for the trial of the persecuted. This fire was *already kindled* in the enmity of the carnal Jews to Christ and his followers. *What will I that it may presently be kindled; what thou dost, do quickly.* If it be *already kindled*, what will I? shall I wait the quenching of it? no, for it must fall upon myself, and upon all, and glory will redound to God from it.

1. He must himself suffer many things; he must pass through this fire that was *already kindled*, *ver. 50.* *I have a baptism to be baptized with.* Afflictions are compared both to fire and water, *Psal. lxxi. 12—14.* 1, 2. Christ's sufferings were both, he calls them a baptism, *Matt. xx. 22.* for he was watered or sprinkled with them, as Israel was baptized in the cloud, and dipped into them, as Israel was baptized in the sea, 1 Cor. x. 2. He must be sprinkled with his own blood, and with the blood of his enemies, *Isa. liiii. 3.* See here, (1.) Christ's foresight of his sufferings; he knew what he was to undergo and the necessity of undergoing it. *I am to be baptized with a baptism*; he calls his sufferings by a name that mitigates them, it is a baptism, not a deluge: I must be dipped in them, not drowned in them; and by a name that sanctifies them, for baptism is a sacred right. Christ in his sufferings devoted himself to his Father's honour, and consecrated himself a priest for evermore, *Heb. vii. 27, 28.* (2.) Christ's forwardness; to his sufferings. *How am I straightened till it be accomplished!* he doth long for the time when he should suffer and die, having an eye to the glorious issue of his sufferings; it is an allusion to a woman in travail, that is *pained to be delivered*, and welcomes her pains, because they hasten the birth of the child, and wishes them sharp and strong that the work may be cut short: Christ's sufferings were the travail of his soul, which he cheerfully underwent, in hope that he should by them see his seed, *Isa. liii. 10, 11.* So much was his heart upon the redemption and salvation of man.

2. He tells those about him, that they also must bear with hardships and difficulties, *ver. 51.* *Suppose ye that I come to give peace on earth*, i. e. to give you a peaceable possession of the earth, and outward prosperity on the earth: is it intimated that they were ready to entertain such a thought as this, nay, that they went upon this supposition, that the gospel would meet with an universal welcome, that people would unanimously embrace it, and would therefore study to make the preacher of it easy and great, that Christ if he did not give them *power and power* would at least give them peace; and herein they were encouraged by divers passages of the Old Testament, which speak of the peace of the Messiah's kingdom, which they were willing to understand of external peace. But, faith Christ, you will be mistaken, the event will declare the contrary, and therefore do not flatter yourselves into a fool's paradise: You will find,

1. That the effect of the preaching of the gospel will be division. Not but that the design of the gospel and its proper tendency is to unite the children of men to one another, to knit them together in holy love, and if all would receive it, this would be the effect of it; but there being multitudes that not only will not receive it but oppose it, and have their corruptions exasperated by it, and are enraged at those that do receive it, it proves, though not the cause yet the occasion of division. While the strong man armed kept his palace, in the Gentile world, his goods were at peace; all was quiet, for all went one way; the sects of philosophers agreed well enough, so did the worshippers of different deities; but when the gospel was preached, and many were enlightened by it, and turned from the power of Satan to God, then there was a disturbance, a noise and a shaking, *Ezek. xxxvii. 7.* Some distinguished themselves by their embracing the gospel, and others were angry that they did so. Yea, and among them that received the gospel there would be different sentiments in lesser things, which would

occasion division, and Christ permits it for holy ends, 1 Cor. xi. 19. that christians may learn and practise mutual forbearance, *Rom. xiv. 1, 2.*

2. That this division will reach into private families, and the preaching of the gospel will give occasion for discord among the nearest relations, *ver. 52.* *The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father*, when the one turns christian, and the other doth not: for that which doeth turn Christian will be jealous by arguments and endearments to turn the other too; 1 Cor. vii. 16. as soon as ever Paul was converted he disputed, *Acts ix. 29.* And that which continues in unbelief will be provoked, and will hate and persecute that which by his faith and obedience witnesseth against, and condemneth his unbelief and disobedience. A spirit of bigotry and persecutions will break through the strongest bonds of relation and natural affection; see *Matt. x. 34—xxiv. 7.* Even mothers and daughters fall out about religion: and those that believe not are so violent and outrageous, that they are ready to deliver up into the hands of the bloody persecutors those that believe, though otherwise very near and dear to them. We find in the Acts, that wherever the gospel came persecution was stirred up; it was every where spoken against, and there was no small stir about that way. Therefore let not the disciples of Christ promise themselves peace upon earth, for they are sent forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.

54. ¶ And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. 55. And when ye see the south-wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. 56. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth: but how is it, that ye do not discern this time? 57. Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right. 58. ¶ When you goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison. 59. I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite.

Having given his disciples their lesson in the foregoing verse, here Christ turns to the people, and gives them theirs, *ver. 54.* He said also to the people: he preached *ad populum* as well as *ad clerum*; and in general he would have them be as wise in the affairs of their souls, as they are in their outward affairs. Two things he instanceth in:

First, Let them learn to discern the way of God toward them, that they may prepare accordingly. They were weather-wise, and by observing the winds and clouds could foresee when there would be rain, and when there would be hot weather, (*ver. 54, 55.*) and they did accordingly, either house their hay and corn, or throw it abroad, and equipped themselves for a journey according as they foresaw the weather would be. Even in the change of the weather God gives warning to us what is coming, and art has improved those notices of nature in weather-glasses. These preparations here spoken of, were made by repeated observations upon the chain of causes; from what has been we conjecture that will be; see the benefit of experience, by taking notice we may come to give notice, who is wise, will observe and learn. See now,

1. The particulars of the presages: Ye see a cloud arising out of the west; the Hebrew would say, out of the sea; perhaps it is at first no bigger than a man's hand, 1 King xviii. 44; but you say there is a shower in the womb of it, and it proves so. When ye observe the south-wind blow, ye say there will be heat, for the hot countries of Africa lie not far south from Judea, and it came to pass ordinarily; yet nature has not tied itself to such a track, but that sometimes we are out in our prognostics.

2. The inference from them, *ver. 56.* Ye hypocrites, who pretend to be wise, but really are not so, who pretend to expect the Messiah and his kingdom (for so the generality of the Jews did), and yet are no way disposed to receive and entertain it, how is it that you do not discern this time? that you do not discern that according to the indications given in the Old Testament prophecies. Now is the time for the Messiah to appear, and that according to the marks given of him I am he! Why are ye not aware that ye have now an opportunity which you will not have long, and which you may never have again, of securing to yourself an interest in the kingdom of God, and the privileges of that kingdom? Now is the accepted time, now or never. It is the folly and misery of man that he knows not his time, *Ecc. ix. 12.* This was the ruin of the men of that generation, that they knew not the day of their visitation, *Luke xix. 44.* But a wise man's heart discerns time and judgment; such was the wisdom of the men of Issachar, who had understanding of the times, 1 Chron. xii. 32. He adds, *ver. 57.* Yea, and why even of yourselves; though you had not these loud alarms given you, judge ye not what is right? You are not only stupid and regardless in matters that are purely of divine revelation, and take not the hints which that gives you, but you are so even in the dictates of the very light and law of nature. Christianity has reason and natural conscience on its side; and if men would allow themselves the liberty of judging what is right, they would soon find that all Christ's precepts concerning all things are right, and there is nothing more equitable in itself, nor better becoming us, than to submit to them, and be ruled by them.

Secondly, Let them hasten to make their peace with God in time, before it be too late, *ver. 58, 59.* This we had upon another occasion, *Matt. v. 25.*

1. We reckon it our wisdom in our temporal affairs to compound with those with whom we cannot contend, to agree with our adversary upon the best terms we can, before the equity be fore-closed, and we be left to the rigour of the law. When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, to whom the appeal is made, and knowest that he has an advantage against thee, and thou art in danger of being cast, you know it is the most prudent course to make the matter up between yourselves, as thou art in the way give diligence to be delivered from him, to get a discharge, lest judgment be given, and execution awarded according to law. Wise men will not let their quarrels go to an extremity, but accommodate them in time.

2. Let us do thus in the affairs of our souls, we have by sin made God our adversary, have provoked his displeasure against us, and he has both right and might on his side; so that it is to no purpose to think of carrying on the controversy with him either at bar or in battle. Christ, to whom all judgment is committed is the magistrate before whom we are hastening to appear if we tarry a trial before him, and insist upon our own justification, the cause will certainly go against us: the judge will deliver us to the officer, the minister of his justice, and we shall be cast into the prison of hell, and the debt will be exacted to the utmost; though we cannot make a full satisfaction for it, it will be continually demanded, till the day: time be paid, when

which will not be to all eternity. Christ's sufferings were short, yet the value of them made them fully satisfactory. In the sufferings of damned sinners, what is wanting in value must be made up in an endless duration. Now in consideration of this, let us give diligence to be delivered out of the hands of God as an adversary, into his hands as a father, and this *as we are in the way*, which has the chief stress laid upon it here. While we are alive we are *in the way*; and now is our time, by repentance and faith through Christ (who is the Mediator as well as the Magistrate) to get the quarrel made up, while it may be done, before it be too late. Thus was God in Christ *reconciling the world to himself, beseeching us to be reconciled*. Let us take hold on the arm of the Lord stretched out in this gracious offer, that we may take peace, and we *shall make peace*, Isa. xxvii. 4, 5. for we cannot walk together till we be agreed.

C H A P. XIII.

In this chapter we have, (1.) The good improvement Christ made of a piece of news that was brought him concerning some Galileans, that were lately massacred by Pilate as they were sacrificing in the temple at Jerusalem, ver. 1—5. (2.) The parable of the fruitless fig-tree, by which we are wanted to bring forth fruits meet for repentance which he had in the foregoing passage called us to; ver. 6—9. (3.) Christ's healing a poor infirm woman on the sabbath-day, and justifying himself in it, ver. 11—17. (4.) A repetition of the parables of the grain of mustard seed, and the leaven, ver. 18—22. (5.) His answer to the question concerning the number of the saved, ver. 23—30. (6.) The slight be put upon Herod's malice and menaces, and the doom of Jerusalem, ver. 31—35.

1. **T**HERE were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? 3. I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. 4. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? 5. I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Here is, 1. Tidings brought to Christ of the death of some Galileans lately, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, ver. 1. Let us consider,

1. What this tragical story was: it is briefly related here, and is not met within any of the historians of those times. Josephus indeed mentions Pilate's killing of some Samaritans, who, under the conduct of a factious leader, were going in a tumultuous manner to mount Gerizim, where the Samaritans temple was; but we can by no means allow that story to be the same with this. Some think these Galileans were of the faction of Judas Gaulonita, who is called *Judas of Galilee*, Acts v. 37. who disowned Caesar's authority, and refused to pay tribute to him; or perhaps these being Galileans, were only suspected by Pilate to be of that faction, and barbarously murdered, because those who were in with that pretender were out of his reach. The Galileans being Herod's subjects, it is probable this outrage committed upon them by Pilate occasioned the quarrel that was between Herod and Pilate, which we read of, *Luke xxiii. 12*. We are not told what number they were, perhaps but a few, whom Pilate had some particular pique against; and therefore the story is overlooked by Josephus but the circumstance remarked is, that he mingled their blood with their sacrifices in the court of the temple. Though perhaps they had reason to fear Pilate's malice, yet they would not under pretence of that fear keep away from Jerusalem, whither the law obliged them to go up with their sacrifices. Dr. Lightfoot thinks it probable, that they were themselves killing their sacrifices, which was allowed: for the priest's work (they said) began with the sprinkling of the blood: and Pilate's officers came upon them by surprise, just at that time when they were off their guard, (for otherwise the Galileans were mettled men, and generally went well armed) and mingled the blood of the sacrificers with the blood of the sacrifices, as if it had been equally acceptable to God. Neither the holiness of the place, nor of the work, would be a protection to them from the fury of an unjust judge, that neither feared God nor regarded man. The altar that used to be a sanctuary and place of shelter, is now become a snare and a trap, a place of danger and slaughter.

2. Why it was related at this season to our Lord Jesus. (1.) Perhaps merely as a matter of news, which they supposed he had not heard before, and as a thing which they lamented, and believed he would do too; for the Galileans were their countrymen. Note, Sad providences ought to be observed by us, and the knowledge of them communicated to others, that they and we may be suitably affected with them and make a good use of them. (2.) Perhaps it was intended as a confirmation of what Christ had said in the close of the foregoing chapter, concerning the necessity of making our peace with God in time before we be delivered to the officer, that is, to death, and so cast into prison, and then it will be too late to make agreements: now say they, Master, here is a fresh instance of some that were very suddenly delivered to the officer, that were taken away by death when they little expected it, and therefore we had all need to be ready. Note, It will be of good use to us both to explain the word of God and to enforce it upon ourselves by observing the providences of God. (3.) Perhaps they would stir him up, being himself of Galilee, and a prophet, and one that had a great interest in that country, to find out a way to revenge the death of these Galileans upon Herod: If they had any thoughts of this kind they were quite out, for Christ was now going up to Jerusalem to be delivered into the hands of Pilate, and to have his blood, not mingled with his sacrifice, but itself made a sacrifice. (4.) Perhaps this was told Christ to deter him from going up to Jerusalem to worship (ver. 22). lest he should serve him as he had served those Galileans, and should suggest against him, as probably he had insinuated against those Galileans in vindication of his cruelty, that they came to sacrifice as Absalom did, with a seditious design, under colour of sacrificing to raise rebellion. Now left Pilate, when his hand was in, should proceed further, they think it advisable that Christ should for the present keep out of the way. (5.) Christ's answer intimates that they told him this with a spiteful inuendo, that though Pilate was unjust in killing them, yet that without doubt they were secretly ill men, else God would not have permitted Pilate thus barbarously to cut them off. It was very invidious, rather than they would allow them to be martyrs, though they died sacrificing, and perhaps suffered for their devotion, they will without any colour or proof suppose them to be male-

factors; and it may be for no other reason but because they were not of their party and denomination, differed from them or had differences with them; this fate of theirs, which was capable not only of a favourable but an honourable construction, shall be called a just judgment of God upon them, though they know not for what.

2. Christ's reply to this report: In which,

1. He seconded it with another story, which like it gave an instance of people's being taken away by sudden death; It is not long since the tower of Siloam fell, and there were eighteen persons killed and buried in the ruins of it. Dr. Lightfoot's conjecture is, that this tower adjoined to the pool of Siloam, which was the same with the pool of Bethesda, and that it belonged to those porches which were by the pool, in which the impotent folk lay that waited for the stirring of the water, John v. 3. and they who were killed were some of them, or some of those who in this pool used to purify themselves for the temple-service, for it was near the temple. Whoever they were, it was a sad story, yet such melancholy accidents we often hear of: For as the birds are caught in a snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them, Eccl. ix. 12. Towers that were built for safety, often prove men's destruction.

2. He cautioned his hearers not to make an ill use of these and such like events, nor from thence to censure great sufferers, as if they were therefore to be accounted great sinners: Suppose ye that these Galileans, who were slain as they were sacrificing, were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered these things, I tell you nay; ver. 2, 3. Perhaps they that told him the story of the Galileans were Jews, and were glad of any thing that furnished them with matter of reflection upon the Galileans, and therefore Christ retorted upon them the story of the men of Jerusalem: that came to an untimely end; for with what measure of that kind we mete, it shall be measured to us again. Now suppose ye that those eighteen who met with their death from the tower of Siloam, that they were debtors to divine justice above all men that dwell at Jerusalem? I tell you nay: Whether it make for us or against us, we must abide by this rule, that we cannot judge of men's sins by their sufferings in this world; for many are thrown into the furnace as gold to be purified, not as dross and chaff to be consumed. We must therefore not be harsh in our censures of those that are afflicted more than their neighbours, as Job's friends were in their censures of him, lest we add sorrow to the sorrowful; nay, lest we condemn the generation of the righteous, Psalm lxxiii. 14. If we will be judging, we have enough to do to judge ourselves; nor indeed can we know love or hatred by all that is before us, because all things come alike to all, Eccl. ix. 1, 2. And we might as justly conclude that the oppressors, and Pilate among the rest, on whose side there is power and success are the greatest sinners, as that the oppressed, and those Galileans among the rest, that are all in tears, and they have no comforter, no, not the priests and Levites that attended the altar, are the greatest sinners. Let us in our censures of others do as we would be done by, for as we do we shall be done by: judge not, that ye be not judged, Matt. vii. 17.

3. On these stories he founded a call to repentance, adding to each of them this awakening word, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*, ver. 3, 4. (1.) This intimates that we all deserve to perish as much as they did, and had we been dealt with according to our sins, according to the iniquity of our holy things, our blood had been long ere this mingled with our sacrifices by the justice of God. It must moderate our censures not only that we are sinners, but that we are as great sinners as they, have as much sin to repent of as they had to suffer for. (2.) That therefore we are all concerned to repent, to be sorry for what we have done amiss, and to do so no more. The judgments of God upon others, are loud calls to us to repent. See how Christ improved every thing for the pressing of that great duty, which he came not only to gain room for and give hopes to, but to enjoin upon us, and that is to repent. (3.) That repentance is the way to escape perishing, and it is a sure way; so iniquity shall not be your ruin, but upon no other terms. (4.) That if we repent not, we shall certainly perish as others have done before us. Some lay an emphasis upon the word *likewise*, and apply it to the destruction that was coming upon the people of the Jews, and particularly upon Jerusalem, who were destroyed by the Romans at the time of their passover, and so like the Galileans, they had their blood mingled with their sacrifices; and many of them, both in Jerusalem and in other places, were destroyed by the fall of walls and building which were battered down about their ears, as those that died by the fall of the tower of Siloam: But certainly it looks further, except we repent we shall perish eternally, as they perished out of this world. The same Jesus that bid us, *repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*, bid us repent, for otherwise we shall perish; so that he hath set before us life and death, good and evil, and put us to our choice. (5.) The perishing of those in their impenitency will be in a particular manner aggravated, who have been most harsh and severe in judging others.

6. ¶ He spake also this parable: A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. 7. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down: why cumbereth it the ground; 8. And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: 9. And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

This parable is intended to enforce that word of warning immediately going before, *except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish*; except you be reformed you will be ruined as the barren tree, except it bring forth fruit, it will be cut down.

1. This parable primarily refers to the nation and people of the Jews: God chose them for his own, and made them a people near to him, gave them advantages for knowing and serving him above any other people and expected answerable returns of duty and obedience from them: which turning to his praise and honour, he would have accounted fruit; but they disappointed his expectations, they did not do their duty, they were a reproach instead of being a credit, to their profession; upon this he justly determined to abandon them and cut them off, to deprive them of their privileges, to unchurch and unpeople them: but upon Christ's, as of old upon Moses's intercession, he graciously gave them further time and further mercy; tried them as it were another year, by sending his apostles among them to call them to repentance and in Christ's name to offer them pardon upon repentance; and some of them were wrought upon to repent and bring forth fruit, and with them all was well; but the body of the nation continued impenitent and unfruitful, and ruin without remedy came upon them, about forty years after they were cut down and cast into the fire, as John Baptist had told them, *Matt. iii. 10*. which saying of his this parable enlargeth upon.

2. Yet

2. Yet it has, without doubt, a further reference, and is designed for the awakening of all that enjoy the means of grace, and the privileges of the visible church to see to it, that the temper of their minds and the tenor of their lives be answerable to their professions and opportunities, for that is the fruit required. Now observe here,

1. The advantages which this fig-tree had, it was *planted in a vineyard*, in better soil, and where it had more care taken of it, and more pains taken with it, than other fig-trees had, that commonly grew not in vineyards, (those are for vines) but by the *win-side*, Matt. xxi. 19. This fig-tree belonged to a *certain man* that owned it, and was at expence upon it. Note, The church of God is *his vineyard*, distinguished from the common, and fenced about, *Isa. v. 1, 2*. We are *fig-trees* planted in this vineyard by our baptism; we have a place and a name in the visible church, and it is our privilege and happiness that we have so, it is a distinguishing favour: *He has not dealt so with other nations*.

2. The owner's expectation from it: *He came and sought fruit thereon*, and he had reason to expect it. He did not *send*, but came himself, noting his desire to find fruit. Christ came into this world, *came to his own*, to the Jews, seeking fruit. Note, The God of heaven requires and expects fruit from those that have a place in his vineyard. He has his eye upon those that *enjoy the gospel*, to see whether they *live* up to it; he seeks evidences of their getting good by the means of grace they enjoy. *Leaves* will not serve, crying, Lord, Lord; *blossoms* will not serve, beginning well and promising fair, there must be *fruit*; Our thoughts, words, and actions, must be according to the gospel light and love.

3. The disappointment of his expectation: *He found none*, none at all, not one fig. Note, It is sad to think how many enjoy the privileges of the gospel, and yet do nothing at all to the honour of God, nor to answer the end of his intrusting them with those privileges; and it is a disappointment to him, and a grief to the Spirit of his grace. (1.) He here complains of it to the dresser of the vineyard; I come *seeking fruit*, but am disappointed; *I find none*, looking for grapes, but behold, *wild grapes*; he is grieved with such a generation. (2.) He aggravates it, with two considerations; 1. That he had waited long, and yet was disappointed; as he was not *high* in his expectations, he only expected fruit, not *much* fruit, so he was not *hasty*, *he came three years*, year after year: applying it to the Jews, he came one space of time before the captivity, another after that, and another in the preaching of John Baptist and of Christ himself; or it may allude to the three years of Christ's public ministry, which were now expiring. In general it teacheth us, that the patience of God is stretched out to long-suffering, with many that enjoy the gospel, and do not bring forth the fruits of it; and this patience is wretchedly abused, which provokes God to so much the greater severity. How many times three years has God come to many of us *seeking fruit*, but has *found none* or next to none, or worse than none. 2. That this fig-tree did not only not bring forth fruit but it did hurt, it *cumbered the ground*, it took up the room of a fruitful tree, and was injurious to all about it. Note, Those who do not do good, commonly do hurt, by the influence of their bad example: they grieve and discourage those that are good, they harden and encourage those that are bad. And the mischief is the greater and the ground the more cumbered, if it be a high large spreading tree, and if it be an old tree of long standing.

4. The doom passed upon it; *Cut it down*. He saith this to the *dresser of the vineyard*, to Christ, to whom all judgment is committed, to the ministers who are in his name to declare this doom. Note, No other can be expected concerning barren trees, but that they should be *cut down*. As the unfruitful vineyard is dismantled and thrown open to the common, *Isa. v. 5, 6*. so the unfruitful trees in the vineyard are cast out of it and wither, *John xv. 6*. It is cut down by the judgments of God, especially spiritual judgments, such as those on the Jews that believed not, *Isa. vi. 9, 10*. It is cut down by death, and cast into the fire of hell, and good reason, *for why cumbereth it the ground?* What reason is there why it should have a place in the vineyard to no purpose?

5. The dresser's intercession for it. Christ is the great intercessor, he ever lives interceding: ministers are intercessors; they that *dress* the vineyard should *intercede* for it; those we *preach to*, we should *pray for*, for we must give ourselves to the *word of God*, and to *prayer*. Now observe,

1. What it is he prays for, and that is a reprieve, *Lord, let it alone this year also*. He doth not pray, Lord, let it never be cut down, but, Lord, not now: Lord, do not remove the dresser, do not withhold the dews, do not pluck up the tree. Note, 1. It is desirable to have a barren tree reprieved: Those that have not yet grace to repent, yet it is a mercy to them to have *space to repent*, as it was to the old world to have 120 years allowed them to make their peace with God. 2. We owe it to Christ the great intercessors, that barren trees are not cut down presently; had it not been for his interposal, the whole world had been cut down upon the sin of Adam; but he said, *Lord, let it alone*; and it is he that upholds all things. 3. We are encouraged to pray to God for the merciful reprieve of barren fig-trees: Lord, *let them alone*, continue them yet a while in their probation; bear with them a little longer, and wait to be gracious. Thus must we stand in the gap to turn away wrath. 4. Reprieves of mercy are but for a time: *Let it alone this year also*, a short time, but a sufficient time to make trial. When God has borne long, we may hope he will bear yet a little longer, but we cannot expect he should bear always. 5. Reprieves may be obtained by the prayers of others for us, but not pardons; there must be our own faith and repentance and prayers, else no pardon.

2. How he promiseth to improve this reprieve if it be obtained: *Till I shall dig about it and dung it*. Note, 1. In general our prayers must always be seconded with our endeavours. The dresser seems to say, Lord, it may be I have been wanting in that which is my part, but let alone this year, and I will do more than I have done towards its fruitfulness. Thus in all our prayers we must request God's grace with a humble resolution to do our duty, else we mock God, and shew that we do not rightly value the mercies we pray for. 2. In particular when we pray to God for grace for ourselves or others, we must follow our prayers with diligence in the use of the means of grace. The dresser of the vineyard engageth to do his part, and therein teacheth ministers to do theirs. He will *dig about* the tree, and will *dung* it; unfruitful Christians must be *awakened* by the terrors of the law, which *break up the fallow ground*, and then encouraged by the promises of the gospel, which are warming and fattening, as manure to the tree; both methods must be tried, the one prepares for the other, and all little enough.

3. Upon what foot he leaves the matter: Let us try it, and try what we can do with it one year more, *and if it bear fruit, well*, ver. 9. it is possible, nay, there is hope, and yet it may be fruitful, and in that hope the owner will have patience with it, and the dresser will take pains with it, and if it should have the desired success, both will be pleased that it was not cut down. The word *well* is not in the original, but the expression is abrupt, *If it bear fruit*, supply it how you please, so as to express how wonderfully well-pleased both the owner and dresser will be, if it bear fruit, there will be cause of rejoicing; we have, what we would have; but it cannot be better expressed than as we do, *well*. Note, Unfruitful professors of religion,

if after long unfruitfulness they will repent and amend, and bring forth fruit; *all shall be well*; God will be *pleased*, for he will be *praised*: Ministers hands will be strengthened, and such penitents will be their joy now and their crown shortly: Nay, there will be joy in heaven for it; the ground will be no longer cumbered but bettered, the vineyard beautified, and the good trees in it made better. And as for the tree itself, it is *well* for it; it shall not only not be cut down, but it shall *receive blessing from God*, Heb. vi. 7. It shall be *purged*, and *shall bring forth more fruit*, for the Father is its husbandman; *John xv. 2*. And it shall at last be transplanted from the vineyard on earth to the paradise above.

But he adds, *if not then, after that thou shalt cut it down*: Observe here, 1. That though God bear long, he will not bear always with unfruitful professors; his patience will have an end, and if it be abused, will give way to that wrath which will have no end. Barren trees will certainly be *cut down* at last, and *cast into the fire*. 2. The longer God hath *waited*, and the more cost he has been upon them, the greater will their destruction be: To be cut down, *after that*, after all these expectations from it, these debates concerning it, this concern for it, will be said indeed, and will aggravate the condemnation. 3. Cutting down, though it is work that shall be done, yet it is a work that God doth not take pleasure in? For observe here, the owner said to the dresser, do thou *cut it down*, for it cumbereth the ground: Nay, said the dresser, if it must be done at last, *thou shalt cut it down*, let not my hand be upon it. 4. Those that now intercede for barren trees, and take pains with them, if they persist in their unfruitfulness, will be even content to see them cut down, and will not have one more word to say for them. Their best friends will acquiesce in, nay they will approve and applaud the righteous judgment of God, in the day of the manifestation of it, *Rev. xv. 3, 4*.

10. And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. 11. ¶ And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. 12. And when Jesus saw her he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. 13. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. 14. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath-day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath-day. 15. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall and lead him away to watering? 16. And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath-day? 17. And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed; and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

Here is, 1. The miraculous cure of a woman, that had been long under a spirit of infirmity. Our Lord Jesus spent his *sabbaths* in the *synagogues*, ver. 10. We should make conscience of doing so as we have an opportunity; and not think we can spend the sabbath as well at home in reading a good book, for religious assemblies are a divine institution, which we must bear our testimony to, though but of two or three. And when he was in the synagogues on the *sabbath-day*, he was teaching there, *ἡ διδασκαλία*; it notes a continual act; he *still taught the people knowledge*. He was in his element when he was teaching. Now to confirm the doctrine he preached, and recommend it as faithful and well worthy of all acceptance, he wrought a miracle, a miracle of mercy.

(1.) The object of charity that presented itself was a woman in the synagogue, that had a *spirit of infirmity eighteen years*, ver. 11. i. e. she had an infirmity, which an evil spirit, by divine permission, had brought upon her, which was such as that she was *bowed together*, by strong convulsions, and could in *no wise lift up herself*; and having been so long thus, the disease was incurable, she could not stand erect, which is reckoned man's honour above the beasts. Observe, Though she was under this infirmity, by which she was much *deformed* and made to look mean, and not only so, but, as is supposed, motion was very painful to her, yet she went to the *synagogue on the sabbath-day*. Note, Even bodily infirmities, unless they be very grievous indeed, should not keep us from public worship on sabbath-days: for God can help us beyond our expectation.

(2.) The offer of this cure to one that sought it not, speaks the preventing mercy and grace of Christ, ver. 11. *When Jesus saw her he called her to him*. It doth not appear that she made any application to him, or had any expectation from him, but *before she called he answered*. She came to him to be *taught*, and to get good to her soul, and then Christ gave this relief to her bodily infirmity. Note, Those whose first and chief care is for their souls, do best befriend the true interests of their bodies likewise, for other things *shall be added to them*. Christ in his gospel calls and invites those to come to him for healing, that labour under *spiritual infirmities*, and if he *calls us* he will undoubtedly help us when we come to him.

(3.) The cure effectually and immediately wrought, speaks his almighty power. He *laid his hands on her*, and said, *Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity*. Though thou hast been long labouring under it thou art at length released from it. Let not those despair whose disease is *inveterate*, who have been long in affliction, God can at length relieve them, therefore though he tarry wait for him. Though it was a *spirit of infirmity*, an evil spirit that she was under the power of, Christ has a power superior to that of Satan, is *stronger than he*. Though *she could in no wise lift up herself*, Christ could lift her up and enable her to lift up herself: She that had been *crooked* was *immediately made straight*, and the scripture was fulfilled, *Psal. cxlvi. 8*. *The Lord raiseth them that are bowed down*.

And this cure represents the work of Christ's grace upon the souls of people. (1.) In the *conversion* of sinners: unsanctified hearts are under this *spirit of infirmity*, they are distorted, the faculties of the soul are quite out of place and order; they are *bowed down* towards things below, *O curvæ in terram animæ!* they can in no wise *lift up themselves* to God and heaven; the bent of the soul, in its natural state, is the quite contrary way. Such crooked souls seek not to Christ, but he calls them to him, lays the hand of his power and grace upon them, speaks a healing word to them, by which he *looseth them from their infirmity*: makes the soul *straight*, reduceth it

it to order, raised it above worldly regards, and directs its affections and aims heavenwards. Though man cannot make that straight which God has made crooked. Eccles. vii. 13. yet the grace of God can make that straight which the sin of man has made crooked. (2.) In the consolation of good people. Many of the children of God are long under a spirit of infirmity, a spirit of bondage, through prevailing grief and fear, their souls are cast down and disquieted within them, they are troubled, they are bowed down greatly, they go mourning all the day long, Psalm xxxviii. 6. But Christ, by his spirit of adoption, looseth them from the infirmity in due time, and raiseth them up.

(4.) The present effect of this cure upon the soul of the patient as well as upon her body: the glorified God, gave him the praise of her cure to whom all praise is due. When crooked souls are made straight, they will shew it by their glorifying God.

2. The offence that was taken at this by the ruler of the synagogue, as if our Lord Jesus had committed some heinous crime in healing this poor woman. He had indignation at it, because it was on the sabbath day, ver. 14.

One would think the miracle should have convinced him, and that the circumstance of its being done on the sabbath day could not have served to evade the conviction; but what light can shine so clear, so strong, which a spirit of bigotry and enmity to Christ and his gospel will not serve to shut men's eyes against? Never was such honour done to the synagogue he was ruler of as Christ had now done it, and yet he had indignation at it. He had not indeed the impudence to quarrel with Christ, but he said to the people, reflecting upon Christ in what he said, *There are six days in which men ought to work, in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.* See here how light he made of the miracles Christ wrought, as if they were things of course, and no more but what quacks and mountebanks did every day; you may come and be healed any day of the week. Christ's cures were become in his eyes cheap and common things. See also how he stretched the law beyond his intention or any just construction that could be put upon it, in making either healing or being healed with a touch of the hand or a word's speaking, to be that work which is forbidden on the sabbath day. This was evidently the work of God; and when God tied us out from working that day did he tie himself out? The same word in Hebrew signifies both godly and merciful, (*chosed*) to intimate that works of mercy and charity are in a manner works of piety, 1 Tim. v. 4. and are therefore very proper on sabbath days.

3. Christ's justification of himself in what he had done, ver. 15. The Lord then answered him, as he had answered others, who in like manner cavilled at him, *Thou hypocrite.* Christ, who knows men's hearts, may call those hypocrites whom it would be presumption for us to call so, who must judge charitably, and can judge but according to the outward appearance. Christ knew he had a real enmity to him and to his gospel, and he did but clothe that with a pretended zeal for the sabbath day; and that when he bid the people come on the six days and be healed, he really would not have them be healed any day. Christ could have told him this, but he vouchsafes to reason the case with him: And,

(1.) He appeals to the common practice among the Jews, which was never disallowed, that of watering their cattle on the sabbath-day; those cattle that are kept up in the stable are constantly loosed from the stall on the sabbath-day, and led away to watering: It would be a barbarous thing not to do it: let a merciful man regardeth the life of his beast, his own beast that serves him. Letting the cattle rest on the sabbath-day, as the law directed, would be worse than working them, if they must be made to fast on that day, as the Ninevites cattle on their fast-days, that were not permitted to feed or drink water, Jonah iii. 7.

(2.) He applies this to the present case, ver. 16. Must an ox or an ass have compassion shewed them on the sabbath-day, and have so much time and pains bestowed upon them every sabbath, to be loosed from the stall, led away perhaps a great way to the water and then back again; and shall not this woman, only with a touch of the hand and a word's speaking, be loosed from a much greater grievance than that which the cattle undergo, when they are kept a day without water? For consider, (1.) She is a daughter of Abraham, whom you all prize yourselves in a relation to; she is your sister, and shall she be denied a favour that you grant to an ox or an ass, dispensing a little with the supposed strictness of the sabbath-day? She is a daughter of Abraham, and therefore entitled to the Messiah's blessings, to the bread which belongs to the children. (2.) She is one of whom Satan has bound, he had a hand in the affliction, and therefore it was not only an act of charity to the poor woman, but of piety to God, to break the power of the devil and baffle him. (3.) She has been in this deplorable condition for these eighteen years, and therefore now there is an opportunity of delivering her, it ought not to be deferred a day longer, as you would have it, for any of you would have thought eighteen years affliction full long enough.

4. The different effect that this had upon those that heard him. He had sufficiently made it out, not only that it was lawful, but that it was highly fit and proper to heal this poor woman on the sabbath-day, and thus publicly in the synagogue, that they might all be witnesses of the miracle. And now observe,

1. What a confusion this was to the malice of his persecutors. When he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed, ver. 17. they were put to silence, and were vexed that they were so, that they had not a word to say for themselves; it was not a shame that worked repentance, but indignation rather. Note, Sooner or later all the adversaries of Christ, and his doctrine and miracles, will be made ashamed.

2. What a confirmation this was to the faith of his friends: All the people who had a better sense of things, and judged more impartially than their rulers, rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done for him. The shame of his foes was the joy of his followers; the increase of his interest was what the one fretted at and the other triumphed in. The things Christ did were glorious things they were all so, and though now clouded, perhaps will appear so, and we ought to rejoice in them. Every thing that is the honour of Christ is the comfort of Christians.

18. ¶ Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it? 19. It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it. 20. And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? 21. It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. 22. And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.

Here is, 1. The gospel's progress foretold in two parables, which we had before. Matt. xiii. 31—33. The kingdom of the Messiah is the kingdom of VOL. III. No. CLXXIX.

God, for it advanceth his glory; this kingdom was yet a mystery, and people were generally in the dark, and under mistakes about it? Now when we would describe a thing to those that are strangers to it, we choose to do it by similitudes, such a person you know not, but I will tell you who he is like; so Christ undertakes here to shew what the kingdom of God is like, ver. 18. and whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God, ver. 20. it will be quite another thing from what you expect, and will operate and gain its point in quite another manner.

1. You expect it will appear great, and will arrive at its perfection all of a sudden; but you are mistaken, it is like a grain of mustard seed, a little thing, takes up but little room, makes but a little figure, and promiseth but little, and yet when sown in soil proper to receive it, it waxeth a great tree, ver. 19. Many perhaps were prejudiced against the gospel, and loth to come in to the obedience of it because its beginning was so small; they were ready to say of Christ, *Can this man save us?* And of his gospel, *Is this likely ever to come to any thing?* Now Christ would remove this prejudice by assuring them, that though its beginning was small, its latter end shall greatly increase; so that many should come, should come upon the wing, would fly like a cloud, to lodge in the branches of it with more safety and satisfaction, than in the branches of Nebuchadnezzar's tree, Dan. ix. 21.

2. You expect it will make its way by eternal means, by subduing nations and vanquishing armies; though it shall work like leaven, silently and insensibly, and without any force or violence, ver. 31. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, so the doctrine of Christ will strangely diffuse its relish into the world of mankind: In this it triumphs that the favour of the knowledge of it is unaccountably made manifest in every place, beyond what one could have expected, 2. Cor. ii. 14. But you must give it time, wait what will be the issue of the preaching of the gospel to the world, and you will find it doth wonders, and alters the property of the souls of men. But degrees the whole will be leavened, even as many as are, like the meal to the leaven, prepared to receive the favour of it.

2. Christ's progress towards Jerusalem recorded, ver. 22. He went through the cities and villages teaching and journeying. Here we find Christ an itinerant, but an itinerant preacher journeying towards Jerusalem, to the feast of dedication, which was in the winter, when travelling was uncomfortable, yet he would be about his Father's business; and therefore whatever cities or villages he could make in his way he gave them a sermon or two, not only in the cities, but in the country villages. Wherever providence brings us we should endeavour to be doing all the good we can.

23. Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, 24. ¶ Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. 25. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: 26. Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. 27. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. 28. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. 29. And they shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. 30. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

We have here,

1. A question put to our Lord Jesus; who it was that put it we are not told, whether a friend or a foe; for he gave both a great liberty of questioning with him, and returned answers to the thoughts and intents of the heart. The question was, 1. *Are there few that be saved?* ver. 23. ὀλίγοι οἱ σωζόμενοι, *If the saved be few?* Master, I have heard thou shouldst say so; Is it true?

(1.) Perhaps it was a captious question; that he put it to him tempting him, with a design to ensnare him, and lessen his reputation. If he should say many would be saved, they would reproach him as too loose, and making salvation cheap; if few, they would reproach him as precise and strait-laced. The Jewish doctors said, *That all Israel should have a place in the world to come,* and would he dare to contradict that! Those that have sucked in a corrupt notion are ready to make it the standard by which to measure all men's judgment; and in nothing do men more betray their ignorance, presumption, and partiality, than in judging of the salvation of others.

(2.) Perhaps it was a curious question, a nice speculation, which he had lately been disputing upon with his companions, and they all agreed to refer it to Christ. Note, Many are more inquisitive who shall be saved, and who not, than what they shall do to be saved. It is commonly asked, may such and such be saved? but it is well we may be saved with knowing that.

(3.) Perhaps it was an admiring question: He had taken notice how strict the law of Christ was, and how bad the world was, and comparing these together, cries out, How few are there that will be saved? Note, We have reason to wonder, that of the many to whom the word of salvation is sent, there are so few to whom it is indeed a saving word.

(4.) Perhaps it was an inquiring question; *If there be few that be saved,* what then? what influence should this have upon me? Note, it concerns us all seriously to improve the great truth of the fewness of those that are saved.

2. Christ's answer to this question, which directs us what use to make of this truth. Our Saviour did not give a direct answer to this inquiry, for he came to guide men's consciences, not to gratify their curiosity. Ask not how many shall be saved, but be they more or fewer, shall I be one of them? Not what shall become of such and such, and what shall this man do? but what shall I do? and what will become of me? Now in Christ's answer observe,

1. A quickening exhortation and direction. *Strive to enter in at the strait gate:* This is directed not to him only that asked the question, but to all, to us, it is the plural number, *strive ye.* Note, (1.) All that will be saved, must enter in at the strait gate, must undergo a change of the whole man, such as amounts to no less than being born again; and must submit to a

strict discipline. (2.) Those that would enter in at the strait gate, must *strive to enter*. It is a hard matter to get to heaven, and a point that will not be gained without a great deal of care and pains, of difficulty and diligence. We must strive with God in prayer, wrestle as Jacob, strive against sin and Satan; we must strive in every duty of religion, strive with our own hearts, *αγωνίζεσθε*, be in an agony, strive as those that run for a prize, excite and exert yourselves to the utmost.

2. Divers awakening considerations to enforce this exhortation: O that we may be all awakened and quickened by them! They are such considerations as will serve to answer the question, *Are there few that shall be saved?*

1. Think how many take *some pains* for salvation, and yet perish because they do not take *enough*; and you will say that there are *few that will be saved*, and that it highly concerns us to *strive*; *Many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able*; they *seek* but they do not *strive*. Note, the reason why many come short of grace and glory is, because they rest in a *lazy seeking* of that which will not be attained without a *laborious striving*. They have a *good mind to happiness*, and a *good opinion of holiness*, and take some *good steps* towards both, but their convictions are weak, they do not consider what they know and believe, and consequently their desires are cold, and their endeavours feeble, and there is no strength or steadiness in their resolutions; and thus they *come short*, and lose the prize, because they do not press forward. Christ avers this upon his own word, *I say unto you*, and we may take it upon his word, for he knows both the counsels of God and the hearts of the children of men.

2. Think of the *distinguishing day* that is coming, and the *decisions* of that day, and you will say there are *few that shall be saved*, and that we are concerned to strive. The *master of the house will rise up and shut to the door*, ver.

25. Christ is the *master of the house*, that will take cognizance of all that frequent his house and are retainers to it, will examine comers and goers, and those that pass and repass. Now he seems as if he left things at large, but the day is coming when he will *rise up and shut the door*. What door?

(1.) A door of *distinction*: Now within the temple of the church there are *carnal professors* who worship in the *outer court*, and *spiritual professors* who worship *within the veil*; between these the door is now open, and they meet *promiscuously* in the same external performances: But when the *Master of the house is risen up*, the door will be shut between them, that those who are in the *outer-court*, may be kept out and left to be *trod under foot by the Gentiles*, Rev. xi. 2. They that are *filthy* shut the door upon them, and let them be *filthy still*; and that those who are within may be kept within, that are *holy, may be holy still*. The door is shut, to *separate* between the *precious* and the *wile*, that *sinners* may no longer *stand in the congregation of the righteous*. Then you shall return and discern betwixt them. (2.) A door of *denial* and *exclusion*. The door of *mercy* and *grace* hath long stood open to them, but they would *not come in by it*, would not be beholden to the *favour* of that door, they hoped to *climb up some other way*, and to get to heaven by their own merits. And therefore when the Master of the house is risen up he will *justly shut the door*; let them not expect to enter by it, but let them take their own measures. Thus, when Noah was safe in the ark, God *shut the door to exclude* all those that depended upon shelters of their own in the approaching flood.

3. Think how many that were very *confident* they should be *saved* will be rejected in the day of trial, and their confidences will deceive them; and you will say there are *few that shall be saved*, and we are all concerned to *strive*: Considering,

(1.) What an *assurance* they had of *admission*, and how far their hope carried them, even to *heaven's gate*, there they *stand and knock*; knock as if they had authority, knock as those that belong to the house, *saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us*, for we think we have a right to enter: Take us in among the *saved ones*, for we joined ourselves to them. Note, Many are ruined by an ill-grounded hope of heaven, which they never distrusted or called in question; and therefore conclude their state is good, because they never doubted it. They call Christ *Lord*, as if they were his servants; nay, in token of their importunity they doubt it, *Lord, Lord*; they are desirous now to enter in by that door which they had formerly made light of, would now gladly come in among those serious Christians whom they had secretly despised.

(2.) What *grounds* they had for this confidence. Let us see what their plea is, ver. 26. (1.) They had been *Christ's guests*, had had an intimate converse with him, and had shared in his favours. *We have eaten and drunk in thy presence*, at thy table; Judas ate bread with Christ, dipped with him in the dish. Hypocrites, under the disguise of their external profession, receive the Lord's supper, and in it partake of the children's bread, as if they were children. (2.) They had been *Christ's hearers*; had received instruction from him, and were well acquainted with his doctrine and law: *Thou hast taught in our streets*, a distinguishing favour which few had, and sure it might be taken as a pledge of distinguishing favour now: For wouldest thou teach us, and not save us?

(3.) How their confidence will fail them, and all their pleas be rejected as frivolous. Christ will say to them, *I know you not whence you are*, ver. 25. And again, ver. 26. *I tell you, I know you not, depart from me*. He doth not deny but that which they pleaded was true, they had *eaten and drunk in his presence*, by the same token, that they had no sooner eaten of his bread, but they lift up the heel against him: He had taught in their streets, by the same token that they had despised his instruction, and would not submit to it. And therefore, (1.) He *disowns them*, *I know you not*; you do not belong to my family. *The Lord knows them that are his*, but them that are not he doth not know, he has nothing to do with them. *I know you not whence you are*. You are not of me, you are not from above, you are not branches of my house, of my vine. (2.) He *disorders them*; *Depart from me*. It is the hell of hell to depart from Christ! The principal part of the misery of the damned: Depart from my door, here is nothing for you, no, not a drop of water. (3.) He gives them such a character as is the reason of this doom. *Ye are workers of iniquity*: this is their ruin; that under a pretence of piety they kept up secret haunts of sin, and did the devil's drudgery in Christ's livery.

(4.) How terrible their punishment will be, ver. 28. *There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*; the utmost degree of grief and indignation; and that which is the cause of it and contributes to it, is a sight of the happiness of those that are saved; ye shall see the *patriarchs and prophets in the kingdom of God*, and yourselves *thrust out*. Observe here, (1.) That the *Old Testament saints* are in the kingdom of God; those had benefit by the Messiah, who died before his coming; for they *saw his day* at a distance, and it reflected comfort upon them. (2.) That *New Testament sinners* will be *thrust out* of the kingdom of God: it intimates that they will be *thrusting in*, and will presume upon admission but in vain, they shall be *thrust out* with shame, as having no part or lot in the matter. (3.) That the sight of the saints glory will be a great aggravation of sinners' misery; they shall thus far see the *kingdom of God*, that they shall see the *prophets* in it, whom they hated and despised, and themselves who thought themselves sure of it, *thrust out*. This is that at which they will *gnash their teeth*, Plal. cxii. 10.

4. Think who are they that shall be saved notwithstanding, ver. 29, 30. *They shall come from the east and from the west; and the last shall be first*.

1. By what Christ had said it appeared, that but *few should be saved*, or those that we think most likely, and that bid fairest for it? Yet do not say then that the gospel is preached in vain, for though Israel be not *gathered*, Christ will be *glorious*. There shall come many from all parts of the Gentile world, that shall be admitted into the kingdom of grace in this world, and of glory in the other. Plainly thus, when we come to heaven we shall meet a great many there, whom we little thought to have met there; and miss a great many thence, whom we verily expected to have found there.

2. Those that *sit down in the kingdom of God*, are such as had taken pains to get thither, for they came from far; *from the east, and from the west; from the north, and from the south*; had passed through different climates, had broke through many difficulties and discouragements; which shews, that they who would enter into that kingdom must *strive*, as the queen of Sheba that came from the *utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon*. They that travel now in the service of God and religion, shall *sit down* to rest shortly in the kingdom of God.

3. Many that stood fair for heaven came short, and others that seemed cast behind, and thrown quite out of the way, will win and wear this prize, and therefore it concerns us to *strive to enter*. Let us be *provoked*, as Paul desired the Jews might be to a holy emulation by the zeal and forwardness of the Gentiles, Rom. xi. 14. Shall I be outstripped by my juniors? Shall I that started first and stood nearest miss of heaven, when others less likely enter in it? If it be got by striving, why should I not strive?

31. ¶ The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee. 32. And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do curse to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. 33. Nevertheless I must walk to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. 34. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! 35. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Here is, 1. A suggestion to Christ of his danger by Herod, now he was in Galilee within Herod's jurisdiction, ver. 31. *Certain of the Pharisees* (for there were none of that sect dispersed all the nation over) they came to Christ, pretending friendship and a concern for his safety, and said, *Get thee out of this country, and depart hence*, for otherwise *Herod will kill thee*, as he did John: Some think those Pharisees had no ground at all for this, that Herod had not given out any words to this purpose, but they framed this lie to drive him out of Galilee, where he had great and growing interests, and to drive him into Judea, where they knew there were those who really sought his life. But Christ's answer being directed to Herod himself, it should seem the Pharisees had ground for what they said, and that Herod was enraged against Christ, and designed him a mischief for the honourable testimony he had borne to John Baptist, and to the doctrine of repentance which John preached. Herod was willing to get rid of Christ out of his dominions; and when he durst not put him to death, he hoped to *frighten him away* by sending him this threatening message.

2. His defiance of Herod's rage and the Pharisees too; he fears neither the one nor the other. *Go ye, and tell that fox so*, ver. 32. In calling him a fox, he gives him his true character; for he was subtle as a fox, noted for his craft and treachery, and baseness, and preying, as they say of a fox, furthest from his own den. And though it be a black and ugly character, yet it did not ill become Christ to give it him, nor was it in him a violation of that law, *Thou shalt not speak evil of the rulers of thy people*: For Christ was a prophet, and prophets always had a liberty of speech in reproving princes and great men: Nay, Christ was more than a prophet, he was a King, he was King of kings, and the greatest of men were accountable to him, and therefore it became him to call this proud king by his own name, but it is not to be drawn into an example by us. Go and tell that fox, yea, and this fox too, for so it is in the original *την αλωπικην ταυτην, that Pharisee*, whoever he is that whispers this in my ear, let him know that *I do not fear him*, nor regard his menaces: For,

1. I know I must die, and must die shortly; I expect it and count upon it, *the third day*, i. e. very shortly; my hour is at hand. Note, It will help us very much about the fear of death, and of them that have the power of death, to make death familiar to us, to expect it, think of it, and converse with it, and see it at the door. If Herod should kill me, he will not surprise me.

2. I know that death will be not only no prejudice to me, but it will be my preferment, and therefore tell him I do not fear him; when I die *I shall be perfected*, I shall then have finished the hardest part of my undertaking, I shall have completed my business, *τελειωμαι, I shall be consecrated*: when Christ died, he is said to have *sanctified himself*; he consecrated himself to his priestly office with his own blood.

3. I know that neither he nor any one else can kill me, *till I have done my work*. Go and tell him I value not his impotent rage. *I will cast out devils and do cures, to-day, and to-morrow*, i. e. now and for some little space of time yet to come, in spite of him and all his threats. *I must walk*, I must go on in my intended journey, and it is not in his power to hinder me; I must go about, as I now do, preaching and healing, *to-day and to-morrow, and the day following*. Note, It is good for us to look upon the time we have before us, as but a little, two or three days perhaps may be the utmost, that we may thereby be quickened to *do the work of the day in its day*. And it is a comfort to us, in reference to the power and malice of our enemies, that they can have no power to take us off as long as God has any work for us to do. The witnesses were not slain till they had finished their testimony.

4. I know that Herod can do me no harm, not only because my time is not yet come, but because the place appointed for my death is Jerusalem, which is not within his jurisdiction: *It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem*, i. e. any where else but at Jerusalem. If a true prophet was put to death, he was prosecuted as a false prophet. Now none undertook to try prophets, and to judge concerning them; but the great Sanhedrim which always sat at Jerusalem, it was a cause which the inferior courts did not take cognizance of, and therefore if a prophet be put to death, it must be at Jerusalem.

3. His lamentation for Jerusalem, and his denunciation of wrath against that

that city, *ver.* 34, 35. This we had, *Matt.* xxiii. 37, 38, 39. Perhaps this was not said now in Galilee, but the evangelist, not designing to bring it in in its proper place, inserts it here, upon occasion of Christ's mentioning his being put to death at Jerusalem.

Note, 1. The wickedness of persons and places, that more eminently than others profess religion and relation to God, is in a particular manner provoking and grieving to the Lord Jesus. How pathetically doth he speak of the sin and ruin of that holy city! *O Jerusalem! Jerusalem!*

2. Those that enjoy great plenty of the means of grace, if they are not profited by them many times are prejudiced against them. They that would not hearken to the prophets, nor welcome those whom God had sent to them, killed them, and joined them. If men's corruptions are not conquered, they are provoked.

3. Jesus Christ has shewed himself willing, freely willing, to receive and entertain poor souls that come to him, and put themselves under his protection: *How often would I have gathered thy children together*, as a hen gathered her brood under her wings, with such care and tenderness.

4. The reason why sinners are not protected and provided for by the Lord Jesus, as the chickens are by the hen, is because they will not. *I would, I often would, and ye would not.* Christ's willingness aggravates sinners' unwillingness, and leaves their blood upon their own heads.

5. The house that Christ leaves, is left desolate. The temple, though richly adorned, though hugely frequented, yet is desolate if Christ have deserted it, he leaves it to them, they had made an idol of it, and let them take it to themselves, and make their best of it, Christ will trouble it no more.

6. Christ justly withdraws from those that drive him from them. They would not be gathered by him, and therefore saith he, *You shall not see me*, you shall not hear me any more: As Moses said to Pharaoh when he forbid him his presence, *Exod.* x. 28, 29.

7. The judgment of the great day will effectually convince unbelievers that would not be convinced: Then you will say, *Blessed is he that cometh*, i. e. will be glad to be amongst those that say so, and will not see me to be the Messiah till then when it is to late.

C H A P. XIV.

In this chapter we have, (1.) The cure which our Lord Jesus wrought upon a man that had the dropsy, on the sabbath-day, and his justifying himself therein, against those who were offended at his doing it on that day, *ver.* 1—6. (2.) A lesson of humility given to those who were ambitious of the highest rooms, *ver.* 7—11. (3.) A lesson of charity to those who feasted the rich and did not feed the poor, *ver.* 12, 13, 14. (4.) The success of the gospel offer foretold in the parable of the guests invited to a feast, signifying the rejection of the Jews and all others that set their hearts upon this world, and the entertainment of the Gentiles and all others that come empty of self to be filled with Christ, *ver.* 15—24. (5.) The great law of discipleship laid down, with a caution to all that will be Christ's disciples, to undertake it deliberately, and with consideration, and particularly to ministers, to retain their favour, *ver.* 25.—35.

1. **A**ND it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath-day, that they watched him. 2. And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy. 3. And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-day? 4. And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go; 5. And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath-day? 6. And they could not answer him again to these things.

In this passage of story we find,

1. That the Son of man came eating and drinking, conversing familiarly with all sorts of people; not declining the society of publicans, though they were of ill fame, nor of Pharisees, though they bore him ill will, but accepting the friendly invitations both of the one and the other; that if possible he might do good to both. Here he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees, a ruler it may be, and a magistrate in his country, to eat bread on the sabbath-day, *ver.* 1. See how favourable God is to us, that he allows us time even on his own day for bodily refreshment; and how careful we should be not to abuse that liberty or turn it into licentiousness: Christ went only to eat bread, to take such refreshment as was necessary on the sabbath-day. Our sabbath-meals must, with a particular care, be guarded against all manner of excess: On sabbath-days we must do, as Moses and Jethro did, eat bread before God, *Exod.* xviii. 12. and, as is said of the primitive Christians, on the Lord's day, must eat and drink as those that must pray again before we go to rest, that we may not be unfit for that.

2. That he went about doing good. Wherever he came, he sought opportunities to do good, and not only improved that those fell in his way; here was a certain man before him, which had the dropsy, *ver.* 2. We do not find that he offered himself, or that his friends offered him to be Christ's patient, but Christ prevented him with the blessings of his goodness, and before he called he answered him. Note, It is a happy thing to be where Christ is, to be present before him, though we be not presented to him. This man had the dropsy it is probable in a high degree, and that he appeared much swelled with it; probably he was some relation of the Pharisee that now lodged in his house, which is more likely than that he should be an invited-guest at the table.

3. That he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, *ver.* 1. They watched him. The Pharisee that invited him, it should seem, did it with a design to pick some quarrel with him; if it were so, Christ knew it, and yet went, for he knew himself a match for the most subtle of them, and how to order his steps with an eye to his observers. Those that are watched had need to be wary. It was, as Dr. Hammond observes, contrary to all laws of hospitality, to seek advantage against one that you invited to be your guest, for such a one you have taken under your protection. These lawyers and Pharisees, like the fowler that lies in wait to ensnare the birds, held their peace, and asked very silently. When Christ asked them whether they thought it lawful to heal on the sabbath-day? (and herein he is said to answer them, for it was an answer to their thoughts, and thoughts are words to Jesus Christ) they would say neither yea or no, for their design was to inform against him, not to be informed by him. They would not say, *It was*

lawful to heal, for then they would preclude themselves from imputing it to him as a crime: and yet the thing was so plain and self-evident, that they could not for shame say it was not lawful. Note, Good men have often been persecuted for doing that, which even their persecutors, if they would but give their consciences leave to speak out, could not but own to be lawful and good. Many a good work Christ did, for which they cast stones at him and his name.

4. That Christ would not be hindered from doing good by the opposition and contradiction of sinners, *ver.* 4. He took him, and healed him, and let him go. Perhaps he took him aside into another room, and healed him there, because he would neither proclaim himself, such was his humility, nor provoke his adversaries, such was his wisdom, his meekness of wisdom. Note, Though we must not be driven off from our duty by the malice of our enemies, yet we should order the circumstances of it so as to make it the least offensive. Or, he took him, i. e. he laid hands on him to cure him; *ἐπιλαβόμενος*, *complexus*, he embraced him, took him in his arm, big and unwieldy as he was, for so dropical people use to be, and reduced him to shape. The cure of a dropsy, as much as of any disease, one would think should be gradual, yet Christ cured even that disease, perfectly cured it in a moment. He then let him go lest the Pharisees should fall upon him for being healed, though he was purely passive; for what absurdities would not such men as they were be guilty of?

5. That our Lord Jesus did nothing but what he could justify to the conviction and confusion of those that quarrelled with him, *ver.* 5, 6. He still answered their thoughts, and made them hold their peace for shame, who before held their peace for subtilty, by an appeal to their own practice, as he had been used to do upon such occasions, that he might shew them, how in condemning him they condemned themselves; *which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit*, by accident, will he not pull him out on the sabbath-day? and that straightway, not deferring it till the sabbath be over, lest it perish. Observe, It is not so much out of compassion to the poor creature, that they do it, but a concern for their own interest. It is their own ox, and their own ass that is worth money, that they will dispense with the law of the sabbath for the saving of. Now this was an evidence of their hypocrisy, and that it was not out of any real regard to the sabbath, that they found fault with Christ for healing on the sabbath-day, that was only the pretence; but really they were angry at the miraculous good works which Christ wrought, the proof he thereby gave of his divine mission, and the interest he thereby gained among the people. Many can easily dispense with that for their own interest, which they cannot dispense with for God's glory and the good of their brethren. This question silenced them, they could not answer him again to these things, *ver.* 6. Christ will be justified when he speaks, and every mouth stopped before him.

7. ¶ And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms, saying unto them. 8. When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; 9. And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. 10. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. 11. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. 12. ¶ Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. 13. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: 14. And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

Our Lord Jesus here sets us an example of profitable edifying discourse at our tables, when we are in company with our friends. We find him when he had none but his disciples, that were his own family with him at his table, his discourse with them was good, and to the use of edifying; and not only so, but when he was in company with strangers, nay, with enemies that watched him, he took occasion to reprove what he saw amiss in them, and to instruct them; though the wicked were before him he did not keep silence from good, (as David did) *Psal.* xxxix. 1, 2. for notwithstanding the provocation given him, he had not his heart not within him, nor was his spirit stirred. We must not only not allow any corrupt communications at our tables, such as that of the hypocritical mockers at feasts, and we must not content ourselves with common harmless talk, but we should take occasion from God's goodness to us at our tables to speak well of him, and bear a spiritualize common things. The lips of the righteous should then feed many.

Our Lord Jesus was among persons of quality, yet as one that had not respect of persons.

First, He takes occasion to reprove the guest for striving to sit uppermost, and from thence gives us a lesson of humility.

1. He observed how these lawyers and Pharisees affected the highest seats towards the head-end of the table, *ver.* 7. He had charged that sort of men with this in general, *Luke* xi. here he brings home the charge to particular persons; for Christ will give every man his own. He marked how they chose out the chief rooms, every man as he came in got as near the best seat as he could. Note, Even in the common actions of life, Christ's eye is upon us, and he marks what we do, not only in our religious assemblies but at our tables, and makes remarks upon it.

2. He observed how those who were thus aspiring, oftentimes exposed themselves, and came off with a slur; whereas those that were modest and seated themselves in the lowest seats, oftentimes gained respect by it. (1.) Those that when they come in assume the highest seats perhaps may be degraded, and forced to come down to give place to one more honourable, *ver.* 8, 9. Note, It ought to check our high thoughts of ourselves, to think how many there are that are more honourable than we, not only in respect of worldly dignities but personal merits and accomplishments. Instead of being proud that so many give place to us, it should be humbling to us, that there are so many that we must give place to. The matter of the feast will marshal his guests, and will not see the more honourable kept out of the seat that is his due, and therefore will make bold to make him lower than usurped

usurped it, *Give this man place*; and this will be a disgrace to him that would be thought more deserving than really he was before all the company. Note, Pride will have *place*, and will at last have a *fall*. (2.) Those that when they come in content themselves with the lowest seats, are likely to be preferred, *ver. 10.* Go and *seat thyself in the lowest room*, as taking it for granted that thy friend who invited thee has guests to come that are of better rank and quality than thou art; but perhaps it may not prove so, and then it will be said to thee, *Friend, go up higher.* The master of the feast will be so just to thee, as not to keep thee at the lower end of the table, because thou wast so *modest* as to seat thyself there. Note, The way to *rise high* is to *begin low*; and this recommends a man to those about him. *Thou shalt have honour and respect before those that sit with thee.* They will see thee to be an *honourable man*, beyond what at first they thought, and honour appears the brighter for *shining out of obscurity.* And they will likewise see thee to be a *humble man*, which is the greatest honour of all. Our Saviour here refers to that advice of Solomon, *Prov. xxv. 6, 7.* *Stand not in the place of great men, for better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up higher, than that thou shouldest be put lower.* And Dr. Lightfoot quotes a parable out of one of the rabbins, somewhat like this, "Three men (said he) were bidden to a feast; one sat highest, for, said he, I am a prince; the other next, for, said, I am a wise man; the other lowest, for, said he, I am a humble man. The king seated the humble man highest, and put the prince lowest."

3. He applied this generally, and would have us all learn not to *mind high things*, but to content ourselves with mean things; as for other reasons so for this, because pride and ambition are disgraceful before men, for *who-soever exalteth himself shall be abased*; but humility and self-denial are really honourable, *he that humbleth himself shall be exalted, ver. 11.* We see it in other instances, that a man's pride will bring him low, but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit, and before honour is humility.

Secondly, He takes occasion to reprove the master of the feast, for inviting so many *rich people*, who had wherewithal to dine very well at home, when he should rather have invited the poor, or which was all one, have sent portions to them for whom nothing is prepared, and who could not afford themselves a good meal's meat. See *Neh. viii. 10.* And our Saviour here teacheth us, that the using of what we have in works of charity is better, and will turn to a better account, than using it in works of generosity and in magnificent house-keeping.

1. Covet not to treat the rich, *ver. 12.* invite not thy friends, and brethren, and neighbours, that are rich. This doth not prohibit the entertaining of such, there may be occasion for it, for the cultivating of friendship among relations and neighbours. But, (1.) Do not use it; spend as little as thou canst that way, that thou mayest not disable thyself to lay out a much better way, in *almsgiving.* Thou wilt find it very expensive and troublesome; one feast for the rich will make a great many meals for the poor; Solomon saith, *He that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want, Prov. xxii. 16.* Give (saith Pliny, *Epist.*) to thy friends, but let it be to thy poor friends, not to those that need thee not. (2.) Be not proud of it, Many make feasts only to make a show, as Ahab did, *Ezra. i. 3, 4.* and it is no reputation to them, they think, if they have not persons of quality to dine with them, and thus rob their families to please their fancies. (3.) Aim not at being paid again in your own coin. This is that which our Saviour blames in making such entertainments, you commonly do it in hopes you will be invited by them, and so a recompense will be made you; you will be gratified with such dainties and varieties as you treat your friends with, and this will feed your sensuality and luxury, and you will be no real gainer at last.

2. Be forward to relieve the poor, *ver. 13, 14.* When thou makest a feast, instead of furnishing thyself with what is rare and nice, get thy table spread with a competency of plain and wholesome meat, which will not be costly, and invite the poor and maimed; such as have nothing to live upon, nor are able to work for their living. These are objects of charity, they want necessities, furnish them, and they will recompense thee with their prayers; they will command their provisions, which the rich it may be will despise. They will go away and thank God for thee, when the rich will go away and reproach thee. Say not thou art a loser, because they cannot recompense thee, thou art so much out of pocket, no, it is so much set out to the best interest, on the best security, for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. There will be a resurrection of the just; a future state of the just. There is a state of happiness reserved for them in the other world: and we may be sure the charitable will be remembered in the resurrection of the just, for alms are *righteousnesses.* Works of charity perhaps may not be rewarded in this world, for the things of this world are not the best things, and therefore God doth not pay the best men in those things; but they shall in no wise lose their reward; they shall be recompensed in the resurrection. And it will be found that the longest voyages make the richest returns, and the charitable will be no losers but unspeakable gainers, by having their recompense adjourned till the resurrection.

15. ¶ And when one of them that sat at meat with him, heard these things, he said unto him, blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. 16. Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: 17. And sent his servant at supper-time to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. 18. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. 19. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. 20. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. 21. So that servant came and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. 22. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. 23. And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. 24. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

Here is another discourse of our Saviour's, in which he spiritualizeth the feast he was invited to; which is another way of keeping up good discourse in the midst of common actions.

1. The occasion of the discourse was given by one of the guests, who, when Christ was giving rules about feasting, said to him, *Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God, ver. 15.* which some tell us was a saying commonly used among the rabbins. But with what design doth this man bring it in here? (1.) Perhaps this man observing that Christ reproved first the guests, and then the master of the house, fearing he should put the company out of humour, started this, to divert the discourse to something else. Or, (2.) Admiring the good rules of humility and charity which Christ had now given, but despairing to see them lived up to in the present degenerate state of things, he longs for the kingdom of God, when these and other good laws shall obtain, and pronounceth them blessed, who shall have a place in that kingdom. Or, (3.) Christ having mentioned the resurrection of the just, as a recompense for acts of charity to the poor, he here confirms what he hath said; yea, Lord, they that shall be recompensed in the resurrection of the just, shall eat bread in the kingdom, and that is a greater recompense than being re-invited to the table of the greatest man on earth. Or, (4.) Observing Christ to be silent after he had given the foregoing lessons, he was willing to draw him in again to further discourse, so wonderfully well-pleased was he with what he said; and he knew nothing more likely to engage him, than to mention the kingdom of God. Note, Those that are not of ability to carry on good discourse themselves, yet ought to put in a word now and then to countenance it, and help it forwards.

Now that which this man said, was a plain and acknowledged truth, and it was quoted very appositely now they were sitting at meat; for we should take occasion from common things, to think and speak of those heavenly and spiritual things which in scripture are compared to them; for that is one end of borrowing similitudes from them. And it will be good for us, when we are receiving the gifts of God's providence, to pass through them to the consideration of the gifts of his grace, those better things. This thought will be very seasonable when we are partaking of bodily refreshments, *Blessed are they that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.* (1.) In the kingdom of grace, in the kingdom of the Messiah, which was expected now shortly to be set up. Christ promised his disciples that they should eat and drink with him in his kingdom. They that partake of the Lord's supper, eat bread in the kingdom of God. (2.) In the kingdom of glory, at the resurrection. The happiness of heaven is an everlasting feast; blessed are they that shall sit down at that table, whence they shall rise no more.

2. The parable which our Lord Jesus put forth upon this occasion, *ver. 16, &c.* Christ joins with the good man in what he said; it is very true, *Blessed are they that shall partake of the privileges of the Messiah's kingdom.* But who are they that shall enjoy that privilege? You Jews that think to have the monopoly of it, will generally reject it, and the Gentiles will be the greatest shares in it. This he shews by a parable, for if he had spoken it plainly the Pharisees would not have borne it.

Now in the parable we may observe,

1. The free-grace and mercy of God, shining in the gospel of Christ; it appears, (1.) In the rich provision he has made for poor souls, for their nourishment, refreshment and entertainment, *ver. 16.* A certain rich man made a great supper. There is that in Christ and the grace of the gospel, which will be food and a feast for the soul of man that knows its own capacities, for the soul of a sinner that knows its own necessities and miseries. It is called a supper, because in those countries supper-time was the chief feasting-time, when the business of the day was over. The manifestation of the gospel grace to the world was the evening of the world's day. And the fruition of the fulness of that grace in heaven is reserved for the evening of our day. (2.) In the gracious invitation given us to come and partake of this provision. Here is, (1.) A general invitation given, *he bade many.* Christ invited the whole nation and people of the Jews to partake of the benefits of his gospel. There is provision enough for as many as come, it was prophesied of, as a feast for all people, *Isa. xxv. 6.* Christ in the gospel, as he keeps a good house, so he keeps an open house. (2.) A particular memorandum given, when the supper-time was at hand; the servant was sent round to put them in mind of it, *Come, for all things are now ready.* When the Spirit was poured out, and the gospel-church planted, those who before were invited, were more closely pressed to come in presently, now all things are ready, the full discovery of the gospel mystery is now made, all the ordinances of the gospel are now instituted, the society of Christians is now incorporated, and, which crowns all, the Holy Ghost is now given. This is the call now given to us, *All things are now ready,* now is the accepted time, it is now and has not been long, it is now and will not be long; it is a season of grace that will be soon over; and therefore come now; do not delay; accept the invitation; believe yourselves welcome; eat, O Friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

2. The cold entertainment which the grace of the gospel-meets with. The invited guests declined coming, they did not say flat and plain they would not come, but they all with one consent began to make excuse, *ver. 18.* One would have expected they should all with one consent have come to a good supper when they were so kindly invited to it, who would have refused such an invitation? Yet, on the contrary, they all found out some pretence or other to shift off their attendance. This speaks the general neglect of the Jewish nation to close with Christ, and accept of the offers of his grace, and the contempt they put upon the invitation. It speaks also the backwardness there is in most people to close with the gospel-call. They cannot for shame avow their refusal, but they desire to be excused; they all *επεμειναν*, some supply *ωπαρς*, all straightway, they could give an answer extempore; and needed not to study for it; were not to seek for an excuse. Others supply *γυναικας*, they were unanimous in it; with one voice.

(1.) Here were two purchasers, and they were in such haste to go see their purchases, that they could not find time to go to this supper. One had purchased land, he had bought a piece of ground, which was represented to him to be a good bargain, and he must needs go see whether it was so or no, and therefore I pray thee have me excused. His heart was so much upon the enlarging of his estate, that he could neither be civil to his friends, nor kind to himself. Note, Those that have their hearts full of the world, and fond of *laying house to house, and field to field*, have their ears deaf to the gospel-invitation. But what a frivolous excuse was this! he might have deferred going to see his piece of ground till the next day, and have found it in the same place and plight it was now in, if he had so pleased. Here was another had purchased stock for his land, *I have bought five yoke of oxen for the plough*, and I must just now go prove them, must go try whether they be fit for my purpose, and therefore excuse me for this time. The former intimates that inordinate complacency in the world, this, that inordinate care and concern about the world, which keeps people from Christ and his grace; both intimate a preference given to the body above the soul, and to the things of time above those of eternity. Note, It is an ill thing, when we are called to any duty, to make excuses for our neglect of it. It is a sign

there are convictions that it is duty, but no inclination to it. These things here that was the matter of the excuses, were, (1.) *Little things*, and of small concern. It had better become them to have said, I am invited to eat bread in the kingdom of God, and therefore must be excused from going to see the ground or the oxen. (2.) *Lawful things*. Note, Things lawful in themselves, when the heart is too much set upon them, prove fatal hinderances in religion, *Little things ruin great ones*. It is a hard matter to manage our worldly affairs, that they may not divert us from spiritual pursuits; and this ought to be our great care.

(2.) Here was one that was *newly married*, and could not leave his wife to go out to supper, no not for once, ver. 20. *I have married a wife, and therefore, in short, I cannot come*. He pretends he cannot, when the truth is he will not. Thus many pretend inability, for the duties of religion, when really they have an aversion to them. He has married a wife; it is true, he that was married was excused by the law from going to war for the first year, Deut. xxiv. 5. but would that excuse him from going up to the feasts of the Lord, which all the males were yearly to attend? much less will it excuse him from the gospel-feast, which the other were but types of. Note, Our affection to our relations often proves a hindrance to us in our duty to God. Adam's excuse was, *The women that thou gavest me, persuaded me to eat*; this here was, *the women persuaded me not to eat*. He might have gone and taken his wife along with him, they should both have been welcome.

3. The account which was brought to the master of the feast of the affront put upon him by his friends whom he had invited, who now shewed how little they valued him, ver. 21. *That servant came, and shewed his lord these things*; told him with surprise, that he was likely to sup alone, for the guests that were invited, though they had timely notice a good while before that they might order their affairs accordingly, yet were now engaged to some other business. He made the matter neither better nor worse, but related it just as it was. Note, Ministers must give account of the success of their ministry. They must do it now at the throne of grace, if they see of the travail of their soul, they must go to God with their thanks; if they labour in vain, they must go to God with their complaints. They will do it hereafter at the judgment-seat of Christ; they shall be produced as witnesses against those who persist and perish in their unbelief, to prove that they were fairly invited; and for those who accepted the call, *Behold, I and the children thou hast given me*. The apostle urges this as a reason why people should give ear to the word of God sent them by his ministers: for they watch for your souls as those that must give account, Heb. xiii. 17.

4. The master's just resentment of this affront; he was angry, ver. 21. Note, The ingratitude of those that slight gospel offers, and the contempt they put upon the God of heaven thereby, is a very great provocation to him, and justly so. Abused mercy turns into the greatest wrath. The doom he passed upon them was, *None of the men that were bidden shall taste of my supper*. This was like the doom passed upon ungrateful Israel when they despised the pleasant land. God swore in his wrath, that they should not enter into his rest. Note, Grace despised is grace forfeited, like Esau's birthright. They that will not have Christ when they may, shall not have him when they would. Even those that were bidden, if they slight the invitation, shall be forbidden; when the door is shut, the foolish virgins will be denied entrance.

5. The cure that was taken to furnish the table with guests, as well as meat. Go, (saith he to the servants) *first into the streets and lanes of the city, and invite, not the merchants that are going from the custom-house, or the tradesmen that are shutting up their shops, they will desire to be excused*: One is going to his counting-house to cast up his books, another to the tavern to drink a bottle with his friend: but that you may invite those that will be glad to come, bring in *hither the poor and the maimed, the halt and the blind*; pick up the common beggars. The servants object not that it will be a disparagement to the master and his house to have such guests at his table, for they knew his mind, and they soon gathered enough such guests. Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded. Many of the Jews are brought in, not of the Scribes and Pharisees, such as Christ was now at dinner with, who thought themselves most likely to be guests at the Messiah's table, but publicans and sinners, these are the poor and the maimed. But yet there is room for more guests, and provision enough for them all. Go then, (2.) *Into the highways and hedges*; go out into the country and pick up the vagrants, or those that are returning now in the evening from their work in the field, from hedging and ditching there, and compel them to come in, not by force of arms but by force of argument; be earnest with them, for in this case it would be necessary to convince them that the invitation was sincere and not a banter; they will be shy and modest, and will hardly believe that they shall be welcome, and therefore be importunate with them, and do not leave them till you have prevailed with them. This refers to the calling of the Gentiles, to whom the apostles were to turn when the Jews refused the offer, and with them the church was filled.

Now observe here, (1.) That the provision made for precious souls in the gospel of Christ shall appear not to have been made in vain; for if some reject it, yet others will thankfully accept the offer of it. Christ comforts himself with this, that though Israel be not gathered, yet it shall be glorious, as a light to the Gentiles, Isa. xlv. 5, 6. God will have a church in the world, though there are those that are unchurched, for the unbelief of man shall not make the promise of God of none effect. (2.) Those that are very poor and low in the world shall be as welcome to Christ as the rich and great; nay, and many times the gospel has greatest success among those that labour under worldly disadvantages, as the poor, and bodily infirmities, as the maimed and the halt, and the blind. Christ here plainly refers to what he had said just before in direction to us, to invite to our tables the poor and maimed, the lame and blind, ver. 13. For the consideration of the countenance which Christ's gospel gives to the poor should engage us to be charitable to them. His condescensions and compassions towards them should engage ours. (3.) Many times the gospel hath the greatest success among those that are least likely to have the benefit of it, and those submissions to it was least expected: The publicans and harlots went into the kingdom of God before the Scribes and Pharisees; so the last shall be first, and the first last. Let us not be confident concerning those that are most forward, nor despair of those that are least promising. (4.) Christ's ministers must be both very expeditious, and very importunate in inviting to the gospel-feast. Go out quickly, ver. 21. lose no time because all things are now ready: Call to them to come to-day, while it is called to-day. And compel them to come in by speaking them fair, and drawing them with the cords of a man, and the bands of love. Nothing can be more absurd than fetching an argument from hence for compelling men's consciences, nay, for compelling men against their consciences in matters of religion: You shall receive the Lord's supper, or you shall be fined and imprisoned, and ruined in your estate. Certainly nothing like this was the compulsion here meant, but only that of reason and love, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. (5.) Though many have been brought in to partake of the benefits of the gospel, yet still there is room for more; for the riches of Christ

are unsearchable and inexhaustible: there is in him enough for all, and enough for each; and the gospel excludes none that do not exclude themselves. (6.) Christ's house, though it be large, shall at last be filled, it will be so when the number of the elect is completed, and as many as were given him are brought to him.

25. ¶ And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them. 26. If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. 27. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? 29. Lest hapily, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him. 30. Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. 31. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? 32. Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an embassage, and desireth conditions of peace. 33. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. 34. ¶ Salt is good: but if the salt have lost its flavour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? 35. It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

See how Christ in his doctrine suited himself to those to whom he spake, and gave every one their portion of meat. To Pharisees he preached humility and charity: He is in these verses directing his discourse to the multitudes that crowded after him, and seemed zealous in following him, and his exhortation to them is to understand the terms of discipleship, before they undertook the profession of it, and to consider what they did. See here,

1. How zealous people were in their attendance on Christ, ver. 25. There went great multitudes with him, many for love, and more for company, for where there are many, there will be more. Here was a mixed multitude, like that which went with Israel out of Egypt; such we must expect there will be always in the church, and it will therefore be necessary that ministers should carefully separate between the precious and the vile.

2. How considerate he would have them to be in their zeal: Those that undertake to follow Christ must count upon the worst, and prepare accordingly.

1. He tells them what the worst is they must count upon; much the same with what he had gone through before them and for them. He takes it for granted they had a mind to be his disciples, that they might be qualified for preferment in his kingdom; They expected he should say, If any man come to me, and be my disciple, he shall have wealth and honour in abundance, let me alone to make him a great man; but he tells him the quite contrary.

(1.) That they must be willing to quit that which was very dear, and therefore must come to him thoroughly severed from all their creature-comforts and dear to them, so as cheerfully to part with them rather than quit their interest in Christ, ver. 26. A man cannot be Christ's disciple, but he must hate father and mother, and his own life. He is not sincere, he will not be constant and persevering unless he love Christ better than any thing in this world, and be willing to part with that which he may and must have, either as a sacrifice, when Christ may be glorified by our parting with it; so the martyrs, who loved not their lives to death; or as a temptation, when by our parting with it we are put into a better capacity of serving Christ: Thus Abraham parted with his own country, and Moses with Pharaoh's court. Mention is not made here of houses and land; philosophy will teach a man to look upon those with contempt but Christanity carries it higher. (1.) Every good man loves his relations, and yet if he be a disciple of Christ he must comparatively hate them, must love them less than Christ, as Leah is said to be hated, when Rachel was better loved. Not that their persons must be in any degree hated, but our comfort and satisfaction in them must be lost and swallowed up in our love to Christ, as Levi's was when he said to his father, I have not seen him, Deut. xxxiii. 9. When our duty to our parents comes in competition with our evident duty to Christ, we must give Christ the preference. If we must either deny Christ, or be banished from our families and relations, (as many of the primitive Christians were) we must rather lose their society than his favour. (2.) Every man loves his own life, no man ever yet hated it; and we cannot be Christ's disciples if we do not love him better than our own lives, so as rather to have our lives embittered by cruel bondage, nay, and taken away by cruel deaths, than to dishonour Christ, or depart from any of his truths and ways. The experience of the pleasures of the spiritual life, and the believing hopes and prospects of eternal life, will make this hard saying easy. When tribulation and persecution arise because of the word, then chiefly the trial is whether we love better, Christ or our relations and lives; yet even in days of peace, this matter is sometimes brought to the trial. Those that decline the service of Christ, and opportunities of converse with him, and are ashamed to confess him for fear of obliging a relation or friend, or losing a customer, give cause to suspect they love them better than Christ.

(2.) That they must be willing to bear that which was very heavy, ver. 26. Whosoever doth not carry his cross, as those did that were condemned to be crucified, in submission to the sentence and in expectation of the execution of it, and so come after me, whosoever I shall lead them, he cannot be my disciple; that is, (saith Dr. Hammond) he is not for my turn; and my service being so sure to bring persecution along with it, will not be for his. Though the disciples of Christ are not all crucified, yet they all bear their cross, as if they counted upon being crucified. They must be content to be put into an ill name, and to be loaded with infamy and disgrace, for no name more ignominious than *Jesus*, the bearer of the gibbet. He must bear his cross and come after Christ, i. e. he must bear it in the way of his duty, whenever it lies in that way. He must bear it when Christ calls him to it, and in bearing it he must have an eye to Christ, and fetch encouragements from him, and live in hope of recompence with him.

2. He bids them count upon it, and then consider of it: Since he has

been *so just to us*, as to tell us plainly what difficulties we shall meet with in following him, let us be *so just to ourselves* as to weigh the matter seriously before we take upon us a profession of religion. Joshua obliged the people to consider what they did when they promised to *serve the Lord*, Josh. xxiv. 19. It is better never begin than not proceed, and therefore before we begin we must consider what it is to proceed. This is to act rationally and as becomes men, and as we do in other cases. And the cause of Christ will bear a scrutiny: Satan shews the best but hides the worst; because his best will not countervail his worst; but Christ's will abundantly. Thus considering of the case is necessary to perseverance, especially in suffering times. Our Saviour here illustrates the necessity of it by two similitudes: The former shewing that we must consider the expences of our religion; the latter, that we must consider the perils of it.

1. When we take upon us a profession of religion we are like a man that undertakes to *build a tower*, and therefore must consider the *expence* of it, ver. 28, 29, 30. Which of you intending to build a tower, or stately house for himself, *sitteth not down first and counteth the cost*? and he must be sure to count upon a great deal more than his workmen will tell him it will lie him in: Let him compare the charge with his purse, lest he make himself to be laughed at, by *beginning to build what he is not able to finish*. Note, 1. All that take upon them a profession of religion undertake to *build a tower*, not as the tower of Babel, in opposition to heaven, which therefore was left unfinished, but in obedience to heaven, which therefore shall have its *top-stone brought forth*. Begin low and lay the foundation deep, lay it on the rock and make sure work, and then aim as high as heaven. 2. Those that intend to build this tower must *sit down and count the cost*; let them consider it will cost them the mortifying of their sins, even their most beloved lusts, it will cost them a life of self-denial and watchfulness, and a constant course of holy duties: It may, perhaps, cost them their reputation among men, their estates and liberties, and all that is dear to them in this world, even life itself. And if it costs us all this, what is it in comparison with what it costs Christ to purchase the advantages of religion for us, which come to us without money and without price? 3. Many that begin to *build this tower* do not go on with it nor persevere in it, and it is their folly; they have not courage and resolution, have not a rooted fixed principle, and so bring nothing to pass. It is true, we have none of us in ourselves, *sufficient to finish this tower*, but Christ hath said, *My grace is sufficient for thee*, and that grace shall not be wanting to any of us if we seek for it and make use of it. 4. Nothing is more *shameful than* for those that have begun well in religion to break off; every one will justly mock him, as having lost all his labour hitherto for want of perseverance. We lose the things we have wrought, 2 John 8. and all we have done and suffered is in vain, Gal. iii. 4, 5.

2. When we undertake to be Christ's disciples we are like a man that goes to war, and therefore must consider the *hazard* of it, and the difficulties that are to be encountered, ver. 31, 32. A king that declares war against a neighbouring prince considers whether he hath strength wherewith to make his party good, and if not, he will lay aside his thoughts of war. Note, 1. The state of a Christian in this world is a military state, *is not the Christian life a warfare*? We have many passes in our way that must be disputed with dint of sword; nay, we must fight every step we go, to resist our spiritual enemies in their opposition. 2. We ought to consider whether we can *endure the hardness* which a good soldier of Jesus Christ must expect and count upon, before we list ourselves under Christ's banner: *Whether we are able to encounter the forces of hell and earth*, which come against us *twenty thousand strong*. 3. Of the two it is better make the best terms we can with the world than we pretend to renounce it, and afterwards, when tribulation and persecution ariseth because of the word, to *return to it*. That young man that could not find in his heart to part with his possessions for Christ, did better to go away from Christ *sorrowing*, than to have staid with him *dissembling*.

This parable is another way applicable, and may be taken as designed to teach us to begin *speedily* to be religious, rather than to begin *cautiously*; and may mean the same with Matt. v. 25. *Agree with thine adversary quickly*. Note, (1.) Those that persist in sin make war against God, the most unnatural, unjustifiable war; they rebel against their lawful sovereign, whose government is perfectly just and good. (2.) The proudest and most daring sinner is no equal match for God; the disproportion of strength is much greater than that here supposed between *ten thousand* and *twenty thousand*. *Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy*? *Are we stronger than he*? no sure; *who knows the power of his anger*? In consideration of this it is our interest to make peace with him; we need not tend to *desire conditions of peace*, they are offered to us and are unexceptionable, and highly to our advantage; let us acquaint ourselves with them and be at peace; do this in time, *while the other is yet a great way off*; for delays in such a case are highly dangerous, and make after-applications difficult.

But the application of this parable here, ver. 33. is to the consideration that ought to be when we take upon us a profession of religion. Solomon saith, *With good advice make war*, Prov. xx. 18. for he that *draws the sword, throws away the scabbard*; so with good advice enter upon a profession of religion, as those that know that *except you forsake all you have, you cannot be Christ's disciples*; that is, except you count upon forsaking, and consent to it, for all that will live godly in Christ-Jesus must *suffer persecution*, and yet continue to *live godly*.

3. He warns them against apostasy and a degeneracy of mind from the truly Christian spirit, and temper, for that would make them utterly useless, ver. 34, 35. (1.) Good Christians are the *salt of the earth*, and good ministers especially, Matt. v. 13. and this salt is good and of great use; by their instructions and examples they season all they converse with, to keep them from putrifying, and to quicken them and make them savoury. (2.) Degenerate Christians, that rather than part with what they have in the world will throw up their profession, and then of course become carnal and worldly and wholly destitute of a Christian spirit, they are like *salt that has lost its savour*; like that which the chymist calls the *caput mortuum*, that has all its salt drawn from it, that is the most useless worthless thing in the world; it has no manner of virtue or good property in it. (1.) It can never be recovered, *wherewith shall it be seasoned*? You cannot salt it. This intimates, that it is extremely difficult and next to impossible to recover an apostate, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. If Christianity will not prevail to cure men of their worldliness and sensuality, if that remedy have been tried in vain, their case must even be concluded desperate. (2.) It is of no use; it is *not fit*, as dung is, for the land to manure that, nor will it be the better if it be laid in the dunghill to rot, there is nothing to be got out of it. A professor of religion, whose mind and manners are depraved, is the most insipid animal that can be. If he do speak of the things of God, which he hath had some knowledge of, it is so *awkwardly* that none are the better for it: It is a *parable in the mouth of a fool*. (3.) It is abandoned; *men cast it out*, as that which they will have no more to do with. Such scandalous professors ought to be cast out of the church, not only because they have forfeited all the honours and privileges of their church-membership, but because there is danger that others will be infected by them. Our Saviour concludes this with a call to all to take notice of it and to take warning;

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. How can the faculty of hearing be better employed than in attending to the word of Christ, and particularly to the alarms he has given us of the danger we are in of apostasy, and the danger we run ourselves into by apostasy?

C H A P. XV.

Evil manners, we say, beget good laws; so in this chapter the murmuring of the Scribes and Pharisees at the grace of Christ and the favour he shewed to publicans and sinners, gave occasion for a more full discovery of that grace than perhaps otherwise we should have had in these three parables, which we have in this chapter; the scope of all which is the same, to shew, not only what God had said and sworn in the Old Testament, that he had no pleasure in the death and ruin of sinners, but that he has great pleasure in their return and repentance, and rejoiceth in the gracious entertainment he gives them thereupon. Here is, (1.) The offence which the Pharisees took at Christ for conversing with heathen men and publicans, and preaching his gospel to them, ver. 1, 2. (2.) His justifying himself in it, by the design and proper tendency of it, and which with many had been the effect of it, and that was, the bringing of them to repent and reform their lives; than which there could not be a more pleasing and acceptable service done to God: which he shews in the parable, (1.) Of the lost sheep that was brought home with joy, ver. 4—7. (2.) Of the lost silver that was found with joy, ver. 8, 9, 10. (3.) Of the lost son that had been a prodigal, but rendered to his father's house, and was received with great joy, though his elder brother, like these Scribes and Pharisees, was offended at it, ver. 11—32.

1. **T**HEN drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. 2. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. 3. ¶ And he spake this parable unto them, saying, 4. What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? 5. And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. 7. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. 8. ¶ Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? 9. And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. 10. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Here is, 1. The diligent attendance of the publicans and sinners upon Christ's ministers. *Great multitudes of Jews went with him*, chap. xiv. 25. with such an assurance of admission into the kingdom of God, that he found it requisite to say that to them which would shake their vain hopes: Here multitudes of publicans and sinners drew near to him, with an humble modest fear of being rejected by him, and to them he found it requisite to give encouragement, especially because there were some haughty supercilious people that frowned upon them. The publicans that collected the tribute paid to the Romans, were perhaps some of those *ill men*, but they were all industriously put into an *ill name*, because of the prejudices of the Jewish nation against their office; they are sometimes ranked with *harlots*, Matt. xxi. 32. here and elsewhere with *sinners*, such as were openly vicious, that traded with *harlots*; known rakes. Some think the sinners here were *heathen*, and that Christ was now on the other side Jordan, or in Galilee of these Gentiles. These drew near, when perhaps the multitude of the Jews that had followed him were (upon his discourse in the close of the foregoing chapter) *dropt off*; thus afterwards the Gentiles took their turn in hearing the apostles, when the Jews had rejected them. They drew near to hear him; being afraid of drawing nearer than just to come within hearing. They drew near to him, not as some did for curiosity to see him, nor as others did, to solicit for cures, but to hear his excellent doctrine. Note, In all our approaches to Christ, this we must have in our eye, to hear him; to hear the instructions he gives us, and his answers to our prayers.

2. The offence which the Scribes and Pharisees took at this, ver. 2. they murmured, and turned it to the re-proach of Our Lord Jesus, *This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them*. (1.) They were angry that publicans and heathens had the means of grace allowed them, were called to repent, and encouraged to hope for pardon upon repentance; for they looked upon their case as *desperate*, and that none but Jews had the privilege of repenting and being pardoned, though the prophets preached repentance to the nations, and Daniel particularly to Nebuchadnezzar. (2.) They thought it a disparagement to Christ, and inconsistent with the dignity of his character, to make himself familiar with such sort of people; to admit them into his company, and to eat with them. They could not for shame condemn him for *preaching to them*, though that was the thing they were most enraged at, and therefore they reproached him for *eating with them*, which was more expressly contrary to the tradition of the elders. Censure will fall, not only upon the most innocent and the most excellent persons, but upon the most innocent and most excellent actions, and we must not think it strange.

3. Christ's justifying of himself in it, by shewing that the worse these people were to whom he preached, the more glory would redound to God, and the more joy there would be in heaven, if by his preaching they were brought to repentance. It would be a more pleasing sight in heaven, to see Gentiles brought to the worship of the true God, than to see Jews go on in it; and to see publicans and sinners live an orderly sort of life, than to see Scribes and Pharisees go on in living such a life. This he here illustrates by two parables, the reddition of both which is the same.

First, The parable of the lost sheep. Something like it we had, Matt.

xviii. 12 there it was designed to shew the care God takes for the preservation of saints, as a reason why we should not offend them; here it is designed to shew the pleasure God takes in the conversion of sinners, as a reason why we should rejoice in it. We have here,

1. The case of a sinner that goes on in sinful ways, he is like a *lost sheep*; a sheep gone astray; *lost* to God, who has not the honour and service he should have from him; *lost* to the flock, that has not communion with him; *lost* to himself, he knows not where he is, wanders endlessly, is continually exposed to the beasts of prey, subject to frights and terrors, from under the shepherd's care, and wanting the green pastures; and it cannot of itself find the way back to the fold.

2. The care the God of heaven takes of poor wandering sinners. He continues his care of the sheep that did not go astray, they are *safe in the wilderness*; but there is a particular care to be taken of this lost sheep; and though he has a hundred sheep, a considerable flock, yet he will not *lose that one*; but he goes after it, and shews abundance of care, (1.) In *finding it out*; he follows it, enquiring after it, and looking about for it, until he *finds it*; God follows backsliding sinners with the calls of his word, and the stirrings of his Spirit, until at length they are wrought upon to think of returning. (2.) In *bringing it home*; though he finds it *weary*, and perhaps *worried* and worn away with its wanderings, and not able to bear being driven home; but *lays it on his shoulders*, and, with a great deal of tenderness and labour brings it to the fold. This is very applicable to the great work of our redemption; mankind was gone astray; *Isa. liii. 6.* The value of the whole race to God was not so much as that of one sheep to him that had a hundred; what loss would it have been to God, if they had all been left to perish? There is a world of holy angels that are as the ninety-nine sheep, a noble flock, yet God sends his Son to *seek and save that which was lost*, *Luke xix. 10.* Christ is said to *gather the lambs in his arms*, and *carry them in his bosom*, noting his pity and tenderness towards poor sinners. Here he is said to hear them *upon his shoulders*, noting the power wherewith he supports and bears them up; those can never perish whom he carries upon his shoulders.

3. The pleasure that God takes in repenting, returning sinners; he *lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing* that he had not lost his labour in seeking; and the joy is the greater, because he began to be out of hope of finding it. And he *calls his friends and neighbours*, the shepherds that keep their flocks about him, *saying, Rejoice with me*; perhaps among the pastoral songs which the shepherds used to sing, there was one for such an occasion as this which these words might be the burden of, *Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost*, whereas they never sang, *rejoice with me, for I have lost none*. Observe, he calls it *his sheep* though a *stray*, a wandering sheep; he has a right to it; all souls are mine; and he will claim his own and recover his right; therefore he looks after it himself, *I have found it*; and did not send a servant but his own Son, the great and good Shepherd, who will find what he seeks, and will be found of those that seek him not.

Secondly, The parable of the lost piece of silver.

1. The *lost* is here supposed to be a woman, who will more passionately grieve for her loss, and rejoice in the finding of what she lost, than perhaps a man would do, and therefore it the better serves the purpose of the parable. She hath *ten pieces of silver*, and out of them loses only one. Let this keep up in us high thoughts of the divine goodness, notwithstanding the misfortune and misery of the world of mankind, that there are nine to one, nay, in the foregoing parable there are ninety-nine to one of God's creation, that retain their integrity, in whom God is praised, and never was dishonoured. O the numberless beings, for aught we know numberless worlds of beings; that never were lost, or stepped aside from the laws and ends of their creation!

2. That which is lost is a piece of silver, *δραχμην*, the fourth part of a *shekel*. The soul is silver of intrinsic worth and value; not of base metal, as iron or lead, but of silver; the mines of which are *royal mines*. The Hebrew word for silver is taken from the desirableness of it. It is *silver coin*, for so the *drachma* was; it is stamped with God's image and superscription, and there ore must be rendered to him. Yet it is comparatively but of small value; it was but seven-pence halfpenny; intimating, that if sinful men be left to perish, God would be no loser. The silver was lost in the dirt; a soul plunged in the world, and overwhelmed with the love of it and care about it, is like a piece of money in the dirt, any one would say, it is a thousand pities it should lie there.

3. Here is a great deal of care and pains taken in quest of it. The woman *lights a candle* to look behind the door, under the table, and in every corner of the house, *sweeps the house and seeks diligently till she finds it*. This represents the various means and methods God makes use of to bring lost souls home to himself; he hath *lighted the candle* of the gospel, not to shew himself the way to us, but to shew us the way to him, to discover us to ourselves; he hath *swept the house* by the conviction of the word; he *seeks diligently*, his heart is upon it, to bring lost souls to himself.

4. Here is a great deal of joy for the finding of it, *ver. 9. Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost*. Those that rejoice, desire that others should rejoice with them; that are merry, would have others merry with them; she was glad she had found the piece of money, though she should spend it in entertaining those whom she called to *make merry with her*. The pleasing surprize of finding it, put her for the present into a kind of transport, *εὐφραν, εὐφραν, I have found, I have found*, is the language of joy.

Thirdly, The reddition of these two parables is to the same purpose, *ver. 7—10. There is joy in heaven, joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth*, as those publicans and sinners did, some of them at least (and if but one of them did repent, Christ would reckon it worth his while) more than over a great number of *just persons, which need no repentance*. Observe,

1. The repentance and conversions of sinners on earth, is matter of joy and rejoicing in heaven. It is possible that the greatest sinners may be brought to repentance: while there is life there is hope, and the worst are not to be despaired of; and the worst of sinners, if they repent and turn, shall find mercy. Yet that is not all, (1.) God will *delight* to shew them mercy; will reckon their conversion a return for all the expence he has been at upon them. There is always *joy in heaven*; God *rejoiceth in all his works*, but particularly in the works of his grace: he rejoiceth to do good to penitent sinners, with his *whole heart*, and his *whole soul*. He rejoiceth not only in the conversion of churches and nations, but even over one sinner that *repenteth*, though but one. (2.) The good angels will be glad that mercy is shewn them, so far are they from repining at it, though those of their nature that sinned to be left to perish, and no mercy be shewed to them; though those sinners that repent, that are so mean, and have been so vile, are upon their repentance to be taken into communion with them, and shortly to be made like them, and equal to them. The conversion of sinners is the joy of angels, and they gladly become ministering spirits to them for their good upon their conversion. The redemption of mankind was matter of joy in the presence of the angels; for they sung, *Glory to God in the highest*; *Luke ii. 14.*

2. There is more joy over one sinner that *repenteth*, and turns to be religious from a course of life that had been notoriously vile and vicious, than there is over *ninety-nine just persons, who need no repentance*. (1.) More joy for the redemption and salvation of fallen man, than for the preservation and confirmation of the angels that stand, and did indeed need no repentance. (2.) More joy for the conversion of the sinners of the Gentiles, and of those publicans that now heard Christ reach, than for all the praises and devotions, and all the *God I thank thee* of the Pharisees, and other the self-justifying Jews, who thought that they *needed no repentance*, and that therefore God should abundantly rejoice in them and *make his boast* of them, as those that were most *his honour*; but Christ tells them it was quite otherwise; that God was more praised in, and pleased with the penitent, broken heart of one of those despised, envied sinners, than all the long prayers which the Scribes and Pharisees made, that could not see any thing amiss in themselves. Nay, (3.) More joy for the conversion of one such great sinner, such a Pharisee as Paul had been in his time, than for the regular conversation of one that had always carried himself decently and well, and comparatively *needs no repentance*, needs not such an universal change of the life, as those great sinners need. Not but that it is best not to go astray; but the grace of God, both the power and the pity of that grace, is most manifested in the *reducing* of great sinners, more than in the *conducting* of those that never went astray. And many times those that have been great sinners before their conversion, prove more eminently and zealously good after; of which Paul is an instance, and therefore in him God was greatly glorified, *Gal. i. 24.* They to whom much is forgiven, will love much. It is spoken after the manner of men; we are moved with a more sensible joy for the recovery of what we had lost, than for the continuance of what we had always enjoyed; for health out of sickness, than for health without sickness. It is as *life from the dead*—a constant course of religion in y itself be more valuable, and yet a sudden return from an evil course and way of sin may yield a more surprising pleasure. Now if there is such joy in heaven, for the conversion of sinners, then the Pharisees were very much strangers to a heavenly spirit, who did all they could to hinder it, and grieved at it: and who were exasperated at Christ when he was doing a piece of work, that was of all other most grateful to heaven.

11. ¶ And he said, A certain man had two sons: 12. And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. 13. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. 14. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. 15. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. 17. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee. 19. And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. 20. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. 21. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. 22. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it: and let us eat, and be merry: 24. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. 25. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing. 26. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. 27. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. 28. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him. 29. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee; neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: 30. But as soon as this thy son was come, which have devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. 31. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. 32. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

We have here the parable of the prodigal son; the scope of which is the same with those before, to shew how pleasing to God the conversion of sinners is, of great sinners, and how ready he is to receive and entertain such upon their repentance; but the circumstances of the parable do much more largely and fully set forth the riches of gospel-grace than those did, and it has been and will be, while the world stands, of unspeakable use to poor sinners, both to direct and to encourage them in repenting and returning to God. Now,

1. The parable represents God as a *common father* to all mankind; to the whole family of Adam; we all are his offspring; have all one Father, and one God created us, *Mal. ii. 10.* From him we had our being, in him we still have

have it, and from him we receive our maintenance. He is our Father, for he has the educating and portioning of us, and will put us in his testament or Law: us out, according as we are or are not dutiful children to him. Our Saviour hereby intimates to those proud Pharisees, that these publicans and sinners whom they thus despise were their brethren, partakers of the same nature, and therefore they ought to be glad of any kindness shewn them. God is the God, not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles, Rom. iii. 29. The same Lord over all, that is rich in mercy to all that call unto him.

2. It represents the children of men as of different characters, though all related to God as their common father: He had two sons, one of them a solid grave youth, reserved and austere, sober himself, but not at all good-humoured to those about him; such a one would adhere to his education, and not be easily drawn from it; but the other volatile, and mercurial, and impatient of restraint, roving, and willing to try his fortune, and if he fall into ill hands likely to be a rake, notwithstanding his virtuous education. Now this latter represents the publicans and sinners, whom Christ is endeavouring to bring to repentance, and the Gentiles, whom the apostles were to be sent forth to preach repentance to: The former, the Jews in general, and particularly the Pharisees, whom he was endeavouring to reconcile to that grace of God, which was offered to and bestowed upon sinners.

The younger son is the prodigal, whose character and case is here designed to represent that of a sinner, that of every one of us in our natural state, but especially of some.

Now we are to observe concerning him,

First, His riot and ramble when he was a prodigal, and the extravagances and miseries he fell into. We are told,

1. What his request to his father was, ver. 21. He said to his father, proudly and pearly enough, Father, give me, (he might have put a little more in his mouth, and have said, Pray, give me, or, Sir, if you please, give me, but he makes an imperious demand) give me the portion of goods that falleth to me; not so much as you think fit to allot me, but that which falls to me as my due. Note, It is ill and the beginning of worse, when men look upon God's gifts as due debts. Give me the portion all my child's part, that fall to me; not try me with a little and see how I can manage that, and accordingly trust me with more, but give it me all at present in possession, and I will never expect any thing in reversion, any thing hereafter. Note, The great folly of sinners, and that which ruins them is, being content to have their portion in hand; now in this life-time to receive their good things. They look only at the things that are seen, that are temporal, and cover only a present gratification, but have no care for a future felicity when that is spent and gone.

And why did he desire to have his portion in his own hands? Was it that he might apply himself to business, and trade with it, and so to make it more? No, he had no thought of that: But, (1.) He was weary of his father's government; sick of the good order and discipline of his father's family, and was fond of liberty falsely so called, but indeed the greatest slavery, for so a liberty to sin is. See the folly of many young men that are religiously educated, but are impatient of the confinement of their education, and never think themselves their own masters, their own men, till they have broke all God's bands in asunder, and cast away his cords from them, and instead of them bound themselves with the cords of their own lust. Here is the original of the apostacy of sinners from God, they will not be tied up to the rules of God's government, will themselves be as gods, knowing no other good and evil but what themselves please. (2.) He was willing to get from under his father's eye, for that was always a check upon him, and often gave a check to him. A shyness of God and a willingness to believe his omniscience, is at the bottom of the wickedness of the wicked. (3.) He was distrustful of his father's management; he would have his portion of goods himself, for he thought his father would be laying up for hereafter for him, and in order to that, would limit him in his present expences, and that he did not like. (4.) He was proud of himself, and had a great conceit of his own sufficiency; He thought if he had but his portion in his own hands, he would manage it better than his father did, and make a better figure with it. There are more young people ruined by pride, than by any one lust whatsoever. Our first parents ruined themselves and all theirs by a foolish ambition to be independent, and not to be beholden even to God himself; and this is at the bottom of sinners persisting in their sin, they will be for themselves.

2. How kind his father was to him. He divided unto them his living: He computed what he had to dispose of between his sons, and gave the younger son his share, and offered the elder his, which ought to be a double portion; but it should seem, he desired his father to keep it in his own hands still, and we may see what he got by it, ver. 31. All that I have is thine. He got all by staying for something in reserve. He gave the younger son what he asked, and the son had no reason to complain that he did him any wrong in the dividend; he had as much as he expected, and perhaps more. (1.) Thus he might now see his father's kindness, how willing he was to please him and make him easy, and that he was not such an unkind father as he was willing to represent him, when he wanted an excuse to begone. (2.) Thus he would in a little time be made to see his own folly, and that he was not such a wise manager for himself as he would be thought to be. Note, God is a kind father to all his children, and gives to them all life and breath, and all things, even to the evil and unthankful, διδεν αὐτοῖς τὸν βίον, He divided to them life; God's giving us life is putting us in a capacity to serve and glorify him.

How he managed himself when he had got his portion in his own hands; he set himself to spend it as fast as he could, and as prodigals use to do, in a little time he made himself a beggar, not many days after, ver. 13. Note, If God leaves us never so little to ourselves, it will not be long ere we depart from him. As soon as ever the bridle of restraining grace is taken off, we are soon gone. That which the younger son determineth was to be gone presently, and in order to that he gathered all together. Sinners, that go astray from God, venture their all.

Now the condition of the prodigal in this ramble of his represents to us a sinful state, that miserable state, into which many are fallen.

1. A sinful state is a state of departure and distance from God: (1.) It is the sinfulnes of sin, that it is an apostacy from God. He took his journey from his father's house; sinners are lied from God, they go a whoring from him; they revolt from their allegiance to him, as a servant that returns his service, or a wife that treacherously depart from her husband, and they say unto God, depart. They get as far off from him as they can. This world is the far country, in which they take up their residence, and are as at home, and in the service and enjoyment of it they spend their all. (2.) It is the misery of sinners that they are as far off from God, from him who is the fountain of all good, and are going further and further from him. What is hell itself, but being as far off from God?

2. A sinful state is a spending state. There he wasted his substance with riotous living, ver. 13. devoured it with harlots, ver. 30. and in a little time he had spent all, ver. 14. He bought fine clothes; spent a deal in meat and drink, treated high, conversed with those that helped him to make

an end of what he had in a little time. As to this world, they that live riotously waste what they have, and will have a great deal to answer for, that they spend that upon their lusts, which should be for the necessary subsistence of themselves and their families; but this is to be applied spiritually; wiliu sinners waste their patrimony, for they misemploy their thoughts, and all the powers of their souls, mispend their time and all their opportunities: do not only bury, but embezzle the talents they are entrusted to trade with for their Master's honour; and the gifts of providence, which were intended to enable them to serve God and to do good with, are made the food and fuel of their lusts. The soul that is made a drudge, either to the world or to the flesh, wastes its substance, and lives riotously. One sinner destroys much good, Eccles. ix. 18. The good he destroys is valuable, and it is none of his own, they are his Lord's goods that he wastes, which must be accounted for.

3. A sinful state is a wanting state. When he had spent all upon his harlots, they left him to seek such another prey, and there arose a mighty famine in that land, every thing was scarce and dear, and he began to be in want, ver. 14. Note, Willful waste brings woeful want. Riotous living in time, perhaps in a little time, brings men to a morsel of bread; especially when ill times hasten on the consequences of ill husbandry, which good husbandry would have provided for. This represents the misery of sinners, who have thrown away their own mercies, the favour of God, their interest in Christ; the striving of the Spirit; the admonitions of conscience, these they game away for the pleasure of sense, and the wealth of the world, and then they are ready to perish for want of them. Sinners want necessities for their souls, they have neither food nor raiment for them, nor any provision for hereafter. A sinful state is like a land where famine reigns, a mighty famine; for the heaven is as brass, the dews of God's favour and blessing are withheld, and we must need want good things if God deny them us. And the earth is as iron; the sinner's heart, that should bring forth good things, is dry and barren, and has no good in it, those sinners are wretchedly and miserably poor, and what aggravates it, they brought themselves into that condition, and keep themselves in it by refusing the supplies offered.

4. A sinful state is a vile, servile state. When the young man's riot had brought him to want, his want brought him to servitude, ver. 15. He went and joined himself to a citizen of that country. The same wicked life that before was represented by riotous living, is here represented by servile living; for sinners are perfect slaves. The devil is the citizen of that country, for he is both in city and country; sinners join themselves to him, hire themselves into his service, to do his work, to be at his beck, and to depend upon him for maintenance and a portion. They that commit sin are the servants of sin, John viii. 34. How did this young gentleman debase and disparage himself, when he hired himself into such a service and under such a master as this? He sent him into the fields, not to feed sheep (there had been some credit in that employment, Jacob, and Moses, and David kept sheep) but to feed swine; The business of the devil's servants is to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lust thereof, and that is no better than feeding greedy, dirty, noisy swine, and how can rational immortal souls more disgrace themselves.

5. A sinful state is a state of perpetual dissatisfaction. When the prodigal began to be in want, he thought to help himself by going to service; and he must be content with the provision, which not the house but the field afforded, but it is poor provision, ver. 16. He would fain have filled his belly, satisfied his hunger and nourished his body, with the husks that the swine did eat. A fine pass my young master had brought himself to, to be fellow-commoner with the swine! Note, That which sinners when they depart from God promise themselves satisfaction in, will certainly disappoint them; they are labouring for that which satisfies not, Isa. lv. 2. That which is the stumbling-block of their iniquity, will never satisfy their souls nor fill their bowels, Ezek. vii. 19. Husks are food for swine, but not for men; The wealth of the world and the entertainments of sense, will serve for bodies, but what are those to precious souls? They neither suit their nature, nor satisfy their desires, nor supply their needs. He that takes up with them, feeds on wind, Hos. xii. 1. feeds on ashes, Isa. xlv. 20.

6. A sinful state is a state which cannot expect relief from any creature. This prodigal, when he could not earn his bread by working, took to begging, but no man gave unto him, because they knew he had brought all this misery upon himself, and because he was rakish and provoking to every body, such poor are less pitied. This, in the application of the parable, intimates, that those who depart from God, cannot be helped by any creature. In vain do we cry to the world and the flesh, those gods we have served, they have that which will poison a soul, but have nothing to give it which will feed and nourish it. If thou refuse God's help, whence shall any creature help thee?

7. A sinful state is a state of death, ver. 24—32. This my son was dead: A sinner is not only dead in law, as he is under a sentence of death, but dead in two states, dead in trespasses and sins; destitute of spiritual life; no union with Christ; no spiritual senses exercised; no living to God, and therefore dead. The prodigal in the far country was dead to his father and his family, cut off from them, as a member from the body, or a branch from the tree, and therefore dead, and it his own doing.

8. A sinful state is a lost state. This my son was lost, lost to every thing that was good; lost to all virtue and honour; lost to his father's house, they had no joy of him. Souls that are separated from God, are lost souls; lost as a traveller that is out of his way, and, if infinite mercy prevent not, will soon be lost, as a ship that is sunk at sea, lost irrecoverably.

9. A sinful state is a state of madness and frenzy. This is intimated in that expression, ver. 17. when he came to himself, which intimates that he had been beside himself, sure he was so when he left his father's house, and much more so, when he joined himself to the citizen of that country. Madness is said to be in the heart of sinners, Eccles. ix. 3. Satan has got possession of the soul, and how raging mad was he that was possessed by legion. Sinners, like those that are mad, destroy themselves with foolish lusts, and yet at the same time deceive themselves with foolish hopes; and they are, of all diseased persons, most enemies to their own cure.

Secondly, We have here his return from this ramble, his penitent return to his father again. When he was brought to the last extremity, then he bethought himself how much it was his interest to go home. Note, We must not despair of the worst, for while there is life there is hope. The grace of God can soften the hardest heart, and give a happy turn to the strongest stream of corruption. Now observe here,

1. What was the occasion of his return and repentance, it was his affliction, when he was in want, then he came to himself. Note, Afflictions when they are sanctified by divine grace, prove happy means of turning sinners from the error of their ways. By them the ear is opened to discipline, and the heart disposed to receive instruction; and they are sensible proofs, both of the vanity of the world, and of the mischievousness of sin. Apply it spiritually; when we find the insufficiency of creatures to make us happy, and have tried all other ways of relief for our poor souls in vain, then it is time to think of returning to God. When we see what miserable com-

forters,

forters, what physicians of no value all but Christ are, for a soul that groans under the guilt and power of sin, and no man gives unto us what we need, then sure we will apply ourselves to Jesus Christ.

2. What was the *preparative* for it, and that was *consideration*: He said within himself, he reasoned with himself, when he recovered his right mind, *How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough!* Note, Consideration is the first step towards conversion, *Ezek. xviii. 23. He considers, and turns.* To consider, is to retire into ourselves, to reflect upon ourselves, and to compare one thing with another, and determine accordingly.

Now observe what it was that he considered.

(1.) He considered how bad his condition was; *I perish with hunger*: Not only I am hungry; but *I perish with hunger*; for I see not what way to expect relief. Note, Sinners will not come to the service of Christ, till they are brought to see themselves just ready to perish in the service of sin, and the consideration of that should drive us to Christ. *Majest, save us, we perish.* And though we be thus driven to Christ, he will not therefore reject us, nor think himself dishonoured by our being forced to him, but rather honoured by his being applied to in a desperate case.

(2.) He considered how much better it might be made, if he would but return. *How many hired servants of my father's, the meanest in the family, the very day-labourers, have bread enough, and to spare*; such a good house doth he keep. Note, In our Father's house there is bread for all his family: this was taught by the twelve loaves of *show-bread*, that were constantly upon this holy table in the sanctuary; a loaf for every tribe. 2. There is enough, and to spare, enough for all, enough for each, enough to spare for such as will join themselves to his domestics, enough and to spare for charity: *Yet there is room*; there are crumbs that fall from his table, which many would be glad of and thankful for. 3. Even the hired servants in God's family are well provided for; the meanest that will but hire themselves into his family, to do his work, and depend upon his rewards, shall be well provided for. 4. The consideration of this should encourage sinners, that have gone astray from God, to think of returning to him: Thus that adulteress reasons with herself, when she is disappointed in her new lovers, *I will go and return to my first husband, for there it was better with me than now*, *Hos. ii. 7.*

3. What was the purpose of it. Since it is so, that his condition is so bad, and may be bettered by returning to his father, his consideration issues at length in this conclusion, *I will arise, and go to my father.* Note, Good purposes are good things, but still good performances are all in all.

1. He determined what to do. *I will arise, and go to my father.* He will not take any longer time to consider of it, but will forthwith arise and go. Though he be in a far country, a great way off from his father's house, yet, as far as it is, he will return; every step of backsliding from God, must be a step back again in return to him. Though he be joined to a citizen of this country, he makes no difficulty of breaking his bargain with him: *We are not debtors to the flesh*, we are under no obligation at all to our Egyptian task-masters to give them warning, but are at liberty to quit the service when we will. Observe with what resolution he speaks, *I will arise, and go to my father*; I am resolved I will, whatever the issue be, rather than stay here and starve.

2. He determined what to say. True repentance is a rising and coming to God; *Behold, we come unto thee.* But what words shall we take with us? He here considers what to say. Note, In all our addresses to God, it is good to deliberate with ourselves beforehand what we shall say, that we may order our cause before him, and fill our mouth with arguments. We have liberty of speech, and we ought to consider seriously with ourselves, how we may use that liberty to the utmost, and yet not abuse it.

Let us observe what he purposed to say.

1. He would confess his fault and folly; *I have sinned.* Note, Forasmuch as we have all sinned, it becometh us and well becomes us, to own that we have sinned. The confession of sin is required and insisted upon, as a necessary condition of peace and pardon. If we plead not guilty, we put ourselves upon a trial by the covenant of innocency, which will certainly condemn us: If we plead guilty, with a contrite, penitent, and obedient heart, we refer ourselves to the covenant of grace, which offers forgiveness to those that confess their sins.

2. He would aggravate it, and would be so far from extenuating the matter, that he would lay a load upon himself for it. *I have sinned against heaven, and before thee.* Let those that are undutiful to their earthly parents think of this, they sin against heaven, and before God. Offences against them, are offences against God. Let us all think of this, as that which renders our sin exceeding sinful, and should render us exceeding sorrowful for it. (1.) That sin is committed in contempt of God's authority over us. We have sinned against heaven. God is here called *heaven*, to signify how highly he is exalted above us, and the dominion he has over us, for the heavens do rule. The malignity of sin aims high, it is against heaven. The daring sinner is said to have set his mouth against the heavens, *Psal. lxxiii. 9.* Yet it is impotent malice, for we cannot hurt the heavens: Nay, it is foolish malice, what is shot against the heavens will return upon the head of him that shoots it, *Psal. vii. 16.* Sin is an affront to the God of heaven, it is a forfeiture of the glories and joys of heaven, and a contradiction to the designs of the kingdom of heaven. (2.) It is committed in contempt of God's eye upon us. *I have sinned against heaven, and yet before thee,* and under thine eye, than which there could not be a greater affront put upon him.

3. He would judge and condemn himself for it, and acknowledge himself to have forfeited all the privileges of the family; *I am no more worthy to be called thy son*, ver. 29. He doth not deny the relation, for that was all he had to trust to, but he owns his father might justly deny the relation, and shut his doors against him. He had, at his own demand, the portion of goods that belonged to him, and had reason to expect no more. Note, It becomes sinners to acknowledge themselves unworthy to receive any favour from God, and to humble and abase themselves before him.

4. He would nevertheless sue for admission into the family, though it were into the meanest post there. *Make me as one of thy hired servants*; that is good enough, and too good for me. Note, True penitents have a high value for God's house, and the privileges of it, and will be glad of any place, so they may but be in it, though it be but as door-keepers, *Psal. lxxxiv. 10.* If it be imposed on him as a mortification, to sit with the servants, he will not only submit to it, but count it a preferment in comparison with his present state. Those that return to God from whom they have revolted, cannot but be desirous some way or other to be employed for him, and put into a capacity of serving and honouring him. *Make me as a hired servant*, that I may shew I love my father's house as much as ever I slighted it.

5. In all this he would have an eye to his father as a father. *I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father.* Note, Eyeing God as a Father, and our Father, will be of great use in our repentance and return to him. It will make our sorrow for sin genuine, our resolutions against it strong, and encourage us to hope for pardon. God delights both by penitents and petitioners to be called Father; *Is not Ephraim a dear son?*

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4. What was the performance of this purpose. *He arose, and came to his father.* His good resolve he put in execution without delay; he struck while the iron was hot, and did not adjourn the thought to some more convenient season. Note, It is our interest speedily to clothe with our convictions. Have we said we will arise and go! let us immediately arise and come. He did not come half way, and then pretend he was tired and could get no further, but, weak and weary as he was, made a thorough business of it. *If thou wilt return, O Israel, return unto me, and do thy first works.*

Thirdly, We have here his reception and entertainment with his father. *He came to his father*; but was he welcome? Yes, heartily welcome. And by the way it is an example to parents whose children have been foolish and disobedient, if they repent and submit themselves, not to be harsh and severe with them, but to be governed in such a case by the wisdom that is from above, which is *gentle and easy to be intreated*; herein let them be followers of God and merciful as he is: But it is chiefly designed to set forth the grace and mercy of God to poor sinners that repent and return to him, and his readiness to forgive them. Now here observe,

1. The great love and affection wherewith the father received the son, ver. 20. *When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him.* He expressed his kindness before the son expressed his repentance; for God prevents us with the blessings of his goodness, even before we call, he answers; for he knows what is in our hearts. *I said, I will confess, and thou forgavest.* How lively are the images of this here! (1.) Here were eyes of mercy, and those eyes quick-sighted; when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, before any other of the family were aware of him, as if from the top of some high tower he had been looking that way that his son was gone, with such a thought as this: O that I could see yonder that wretched son of mine coming home! This intimates God's desire of the conversion of sinners, and his readiness to meet them that are coming towards him. *He looketh on men* when they are gone astray from him, to see whether they will return to him, and he is aware of the first inclination towards him. (2.) Here were bowels of mercy, and those bowels turning within him, and yearning at the sight of his son, he had compassion. Misery is the object of pity, even the misery of a sinner, though he has brought it upon himself, yet God compassionate. *His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel*, *Hos. xi. 8.* *Judg. x. 16.* (3.) Here were feet of mercy, and those feet quick-paced, he ran; this notes how swift God is to shew mercy. The prodigal son came slowly, under a burden of shame and fear, but the tender father ran to meet him with his encouragements. (4.) Here were arms of mercy, and those arms stretched out to embrace him; he fell on his neck; though guilty and deserving to be beaten, though dirty and newly come from feeding swine, that any one that had not the strongest and tenderest compassions of a father would have loathed to touch him; yet he thus takes him in his arms and lays him in his bosom. Thus dear are true penitents to God, thus welcome to the Lord Jesus. (5.) Here are lips of mercy, and those lips dropping as a honey-comb, he kissed him; this kiss not only assured him of his welcome, but sealed his pardon; his former follies shall be all forgiven, and not mentioned against him, nor is one word said by way of upbraiding. This was like David's kissing Absalom, *2 Sam. xiv. 33.* And all this speaks how ready and free and forward the Lord Jesus is to receive and entertain poor returning repenting sinners, according to his Father's will.

2. The penitent submission which the poor prodigal made to his father, ver. 21. *He said unto him, Father, I have sinned.* As it commends the good father's kindness, that he shewed it before the prodigal expressed his repentance; so it commends the prodigal's repentance, that he expressed it after his father had shewed him so much kindness. When he had received the kiss which sealed his pardon, yet he said, *Father, I have sinned.* Note, Even those that have received the pardon of their sins and the comfortable sense of their pardon, yet must have in their hearts a sincere contrition for it, and with their mouths must make a penitent confession of it, even of those sins which they have reason to hope are pardoned. David penned *Psal. li.* after Nathan had said, *The Lord has taken away thy sin, thou shalt not die.* Nay, the comfortable sense of the pardon of sin should create on our brow for it; and that is ingenuous evangelical sorrow, which is increased by such a consideration. See *Ezek. xvi. 6.* *Thou shalt be ashamed and confounded, when I am pacified towards thee.* The more we see of God's readiness to forgive us, the more difficult it should be to us to forgive ourselves.

3. The splendid provision which this kind father made for the returning prodigal. He was going on in his submission, but one word we find in his purpose what to say, ver. 19. which we do not find he did say, ver. 21. and that was, *make me as one of thy hired servants.* We cannot think he forgot it, much less that he changed his mind, and was now either less desirous to be in the family, or less willing to be a hired servant there than when he made that purpose; but his father interrupted him, prevented his saying it; hold, son, talk no more of thine unworthiness, thou art heartily welcome, and though not worthy to be called a son, shall be treated as a dear son, as a pleasant child. He who is thus entertained at first needs not ask to be made as a hired servant. Thus when Ephraim bewailed himself, God comforted him, *Jer. xxxi. 19-20.* It is strange that here is not one word of rebuke; why did you not stay with your harlots and your swine? You could never find the way home till beaten hither with your own rod. No, here is nothing like this; which intimates that, when God forgives the sins of true penitents he forgets them, he remembers them no more, they shall not be mentioned against them, *Ezek. xviii. 22.*

But this is not all; here is rich and royal provision made for him, according to his birth and quality, far beyond what he did or could expect. He would have thought it sufficient, and been very thankful if his father had but taken notice of him, and bid him go to the kitchen and get his dinner with the servants; but God doth for those who return to their duty, and cast themselves upon his mercy, abundantly above what they are able to ask or think. The prodigal came home between hope and fear, fear of being rejected, and hope of being received; but his father was not only better to him than his fears, but better to him than his hopes, not only received him, but received him with respect.

1. He came home in rags, and his father not only clothed him, but adorned him. *He said to the servants, who all attended their master upon notice that his son was come, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him.* The worst old clothes in the house might have served, and had been good enough for him; but the father calls not for a coat, but for a robe, the garment of princes and great men, the best robe, *τὴν εὐλογητὴν πρώτην*, there is a double emphasis, that robe, that principal robe, you know which I mean; the first robe, so it may be read, the robe he wore before he began his ramble. When backsliders repent and do their first works, they shall be received and dressed in their first robes. Bring hither that robe and put it on him; he will be ashamed to wear it, and think it ill becomes him who comes home in such a dirty pickle, but put it on him, and do not offer it him only. And put a ring on his hand, a signet-ring, with the arms of the family, in token of his being owned as a branch of the family; rich people wore rings, and his father hereby signified that though he had spent one portion, yet upon his

his repentance he intended him another. He came bare barefoot, his feet perha's fore with travel, and therefore put *shoes on his feet*, to make him easy. Thus doth the grace of God provide for true penitents. (1.) The *righteousness of Christ* is the robe, that *principal robe* with which they are clothed; they that put on the Lord Jesus Christ, are clothed with that *sun*. The robe of righteousness is the garment of salvation, Isa. lxi. 10. A new nature is this *best robe*, true penitents are clothed with that, being sanctified throughout. (2.) The *earnest* of the Spirit, by whom we are sealed to the day of redemption, is the *ring on the hand*. After that ye believed, ye were sealed. They that are sanctified are adorned and dignified, are put in power as Joseph was by Pharaoh's giving him a ring. Put a ring on his hand, to be before him a constant memorial of his father's kindness, that he may never forget it. (3.) The *preparation of the gospel of peace*, is *shoes for our feet*, Eph. vi. 13. So that compared with this here, signifies, (saith Grotius) that God when he receives true penitents into his favour makes use of them for the convincing and converting of others by their instructions, at least by their examples. David when pardoned will teach transgressors God's ways, and Peter when he is converted will strengthen his brethren. Or it intimates that they shall go on cheerfully and with resolution in the way of religion, as a man doth when he hath shoes on his feet, to what he doth when he is barefoot.

2. He came home hungry, and his father not only fed him but *feasted him*, ver. 23. Bring hither the *fatted calf*, that has been stall fed, and long reserved for some special occasion, and kill it, that my son may have his belly full of the best we have. Cold meat might have served, or the leavings of the last meal, but he shall have fresh meat and hot meat, and the fatted calf can never be better bestowed. Note, There is excellent food provided by our heavenly Father for all those that *arise and come to him*. Christ himself is the bread of life; his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed; in him there is a feast for souls, a feast of fat things. It was a great change with the prodigal, who but a little while ago would fain have filled his belly with husks. How sweet will the supplies of the new covenant be, and the relishes of its comforts to those who have been labouring in vain for satisfaction in the creature? Now he found his own words made good, *In my father's house there is bread enough and to spare*.

4. The great joy and rejoicing that there was for his return. The bringing of the fatted calf was designed to be not only a feast for him, but a *feast* for the family; let us all eat and be merry, for it is a good day; for *this my son was dead*, when he was in his ramble, but his return is as *life from the dead*, he is *alive again*; we thought he was dead, having heard nothing from him of a long time, but behold he *lives*; he was *lost*, we gave him up for lost, we despaired of hearing of him, but he is *found*. Note, 1. The conversion of a soul from sin to God, is the raising of that soul from death to life, and the finding of that which seemed to be lost. It is a great and wonderful and happy change. What was in itself *dead* is made *alive*; what was *lost* to God and his church is *found*, and what was *unprofitable* becomes *profitable*, Phil. ii. 11. It is such a change as that upon the face of the earth when the springs return. 2. The conversion of sinners is greatly pleasing to the God of heaven, and all that belong to his family ought to rejoice in it; those in heaven do, and those on earth should. Observe, it was the father that began the joy, and set all the rest on rejoicing; therefore we should be glad of the repentance of sinners, because it accomplishes God's designs, it is the bringing of those to Christ whom the Father had given him, and in whom he will be for ever glorified. We joy for your sakes before our God, with an eye to him, 1 Thess. iii. 9. and we are our rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the master of the family, 1 Thess. ii. 19.

The family complied with the master, they began to be merry. Note, God's children and servants ought to be affected with things as he is.

Fourthly, We have here the *reproving and enjoining of the elder brother*, which is described by way of reproof to the Scribes and Pharisees, to shew them the folly and wickedness of their discontent at the repentance and conversion of the publicans and sinners, and the favour Christ shewed them; and he represents it so as not to aggravate the matter, but as allowing them still the privileges of elder brethren; the Jews had so, though the Gentiles were favoured, for the preaching of the gospel must begin at Jerusalem. Christ, when he reproves them for their faults, yet spoke them fair, to smooth them into a good temper towards the poor publicans. But by the elder brother here we may understand those that are really good, and have been so from their youth up, and never went astray into any vicious course of living; who comparatively need no repentance: and to such these words in the close, *Son, thou art ever with me*, are applicable without any difficulty, but not to the Scribes and Pharisees.

Now concerning the elder brother, observe,

1. How *stolish and fretful* he was upon the occasion of his brother's reception, and how he was disgusted at it. It seems he was abroad in the field, in the country, when his brother came, and by that time he was returned home the mirth was begun; when he drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing, either while the dinner was in getting ready, or rather after they had eaten and were full, ver. 25. He inquired what those things meant, ver. 26. and was informed that his brother was come, and his father had made him a feast for his welcome home, and great joy there was, because he had received him safe and sound, ver. 27. It is but one word in the original, he had received him *joyously*, in health, well both in body and mind. He received him not only well in body, but a penitent, returned to his right mind, and well reconciled to his father's house, cured of his vices and his rakish disposition, else he had not been received safe and sound. Now this disoblige him to the highest degree; he was *angry and would not go in*, ver. 28. not only because he was resolved he would not himself join in the mirth, but because he would shew his displeasure at it, and would intimate to his father that he should have kept out his younger brother. This shews what is a common fault, (1.) In men's families, that those who have always been a comfort to their parents think they should have the monopoly of their parents' favours, and are apt to be too sharp upon those who have transgressed, and to grudge their parents kindness to them. (2.) In God's family, those that are comparatively *innocent* seldom know how to be compassionate towards those that are manifestly penitents. The language of such we have here in what the elder brother said, ver. 29, 30. and it is written for warning to those that by the grace of God are kept from scandalous sin, and kept in the way of virtue and sobriety, that they sin not after the similitude of this transgression. Let us observe the particulars of it.

1. He *boasted of himself and of his own virtue and obedience*. He had not only not run from his father's house as his brother did, but had made himself as a servant in it, and had done so long. *Lo these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandments*. Note, It is too common for those that are better than their neighbours to brag of it, yea, and to make their boast of it before God himself, as if he were indebted to them for it. I am apt to think this elder brother said more than was true, when he gloried that he had never transgressed his father's commands, for then I believe he would not have been so obstinate as now he was to his father's intreaties. However we will admit it comparatively, he had

not been so obedient as his brother had been. O what need have good men to take heed of pride, a corruption that ariseth out of the ashes of other corruptions! Those that have long served God and been kept from gross sins have a great deal to be humbly thankful for, but nothing proudly to boast of.

2. He *complained of his father*, as if he had not been so kind to him as he ought to have been, who had been so dutiful; *thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends*. He was out of humour now, else he would not have made this complaint; for no question if he had asked such a thing at any time he might have had it at first word; and we have reason to think he did not desire it; but the *killing of the fatted calf* put him upon making this peevish reflection. When men are in a passion they are apt to reflect so as they would not if they were in their right mind. He had been fed at his father's table, and had many a time been merry with him and the family, but his father had never given him so much as a kid, which was but a small token of love compared with the fatted calf. Note, Those that think highly of themselves and their services are apt to think hardly of their master and meanly of his favours. We ought to own ourselves utterly unworthy of those mercies which God had thought fit to give us, much more for those that he hath not thought fit to give us, and therefore we must not complain. He would have had a kid to make merry with his friends abroad, whereas the fatted calf he grudged so much was given to his brother, not to make merry with his friends abroad, but with the family at home: the mirth of God's children should be with their father and his family, in communion with God and his saints, and not with any other friends.

3. He was very *ill-humoured* towards his younger brother, and harsh in what he thought and said concerning him. Some good people are apt to be overtaken in this fault, nay and to indulge themselves too much in it; to look with disdain upon those who have not preserved their reputation so clean as they have done, and to be sour and morose towards them, yea though they have given very good evidences of their repentance and reformation; this is not the Spirit of Christ, but of the Pharisees. Let us observe the instances of it.

1. He would not go in except his brother be turned out; one house shall not hold him and his own brother, no not his father's house. The language of this was that of the Pharisee, *Isr. lxi. 5. Stand by thyself, come not near me, for I am holier than thou*; and *Luke xviii. 11. I am not as other men are, nor even as this publican*. Note, Though we are to shun the society of those sinners whom we are in danger of being affected by, yet we must not be shy of the company of penitent sinners, whom we may get good by. He saw his father had taken him in, and yet he would not go in to him. Note, We think too well of ourselves, if we cannot find in our hearts to receive those God hath received, and to admit those into favour and friendship and fellowship with us whom we have reason to think God has a favour for, and are taken into friendship and fellowship with him.

2. He would not call him brother; but this *thy son*, which sounds arrogantly, and not without reflection upon his father, as if his indulgence had made him a prodigal; he is *thy son*, thy darling. Note, Forgetting the relation we stand in to our brethren, as brethren, and disowning that, is at the bottom of all our neglects of our duty to them and our contradictions to that duty. Let us give our relations, both in the flesh and in the Lord, the titles that belong to them. Let the rich call the poor brethren, and let the innocents call the penitents so.

3. He aggravated his brother's faults, and made the worst of them, endeavouring to incense his father against them; he is *thy son, who hath devoured thy living with harlots*. It is true he had spent his whole portion foolishly enough, whether upon harlots or no we are not told before, perhaps that was only the language of the elder brother's jealousy and ill-will; but that he had devoured all his father's living was false, the father had still a good estate; now this shews how apt we are in censuring our brethren to make the worst of every thing, and to set it out in the blackest colours, which is not doing as we would be done by, nor as our heavenly Father doth by us; who is not extreme to mark iniquities.

4. He grudged him the kindness that his father shewed him. *Thou hast killed for him the fatted calf*, as if he were such a son as should be. Note, It is an ill thing to envy penitents the grace of God, and to have our eye evil because his is good. As we must not envy those that are the worst of sinners the gifts of common providence, *Let not thine heart envy sinners*; so we must not envy those that have been the worst of sinners the gifts of covenant love upon their repentance; we must not envy them their pardon and peace and comfort, no, nor any extraordinary gift God bestows upon them, which makes them eminently acceptable or useful. Paul before his conversion had been a prodigal, had devoured his heavenly Father's living; by the harlot he made of the church, yet when after his conversion he had greater measures of grace given him, and more honour put upon him than the other apostles, they who were the elder brethren, that had been serving Christ when he was persecuting him, and had not transgressed at any time his commandments, did not envy him his visions and revelations, nor his more extensive usefulness, but glorified God in him; which ought to be an example to us, as the reverse of this elder brother.

2. Let us now see how favourable and friendly his father was in his carriage towards him when he was thus sour and ill-humoured, and this is as surprising as the former. Methinks the mercy and grace of our God in Christ shines almost as bright in his tender and gentle bearing with peevish saints, represented by the elder brother here, as before in his reception of prodigal sinners upon their repentance, represented before by the younger brother. The disciples of Christ themselves had many infirmities, and were men subject to like passions as others, yet Christ bore with them; as a nurse with her children, see 1 Thess. ii. 7.

1. When he would not come in, his father came out and intreated him, spoke him fair, gave him good words, and desired him to come in. He might justly have said, If he will not come in let him stay out, shut the doors against him, and send him to seek a lodging where he can find it: Is not the house my own, and may I not do what I please in it? The fatted calf my own, and may I not do what I please with it? No, as he went to meet the younger son, so now he goes out to court the elder, did not send a servant out with a kind message to him, but went himself. Now, (1.) This is designed to represent to us the goodness of God; how strangely gentle and winning he has been towards those that were strangely froward and provoking. He reasoned with Cain, *Why art thou wroth?* He bare Israel's manners in the wilderness, Acts xx. 18. How mildly did God reason with Elijah, when he was upon the fret? 1 Kings xix. 4, 5, 6. and especially with Jonah, whose case was very parallel with this here, for he was there disquieted at the repentance of Nineveh, and the mercy shewed it, as the elder brother here, and those questions *Doest thou well to be angry?* and *Should not I spare Nineveh?* are not unlike these expostulations of the father with the elder brother here. (2.) It is to teach all superiors to be mild and gentle with their inferiors, even when they are in a fault and passionately justifying themselves in it, than which nothing can be more provoking; and yet even in that case let fathers not provoke their children to more wrath, and masters forbear threatening, and both shew all meekness.

2. His father assured him that the kind entertainment he gave his younger brother, neither was any reflection upon him, nor should be any prejudice to him, ver. 31. Thou shalt fare never the worse for it, nor have ever the less for it: *Son, thou art ever with me*, the reception of him is no rejection of thee, nor what is laid out on him, any sensible diminution of what I design for thee, thou shalt still remain intitled to the *patrimonia*, so our law calls it, the *double portion*, so the Jewish law called it, thou shalt be *heir ex affe*, so the Roman law called it, *All that I have is thine*, by an indefeasible title. If he had not given him a kid to make merry with his friends, he had eaten bread at his table continually: And it is better to be happy with our Father in heaven, than merry with any friend we have in the world. Note, (1.) It is the unspeakable happiness of all the children of God, who keep close to their Father's house, that they are and shall be ever with him; they are so in this world by faith, they shall be so in the other world by fruition, and all that he has is theirs; for *if children, then heirs*, Rom. viii. 17. (2.) Therefore we ought not to envy others God's grace to them, because we shall have never the less for their sharing in it. If we be true believers, all that God is, and all that he has, is *ours*; and if others come to be true believers, all that he is, and all that he has, is theirs too, and yet we have not the less; as they that walk in the light and warmth of the sun, have all the benefit they can have by it, and yet not the less for others having as much: For Christ in his church, is like as they say of the soul in the body, it is *tota in toto*, and yet *tota in qualibet parte*.

3. His father gave him a good reason for this uncommon joy in the family, ver. 32. *It was meet that we should make merry and be glad*. He might have insisted upon his own authority; it was *my will* that the family should make merry and be glad, *stat pro ratione voluntas*. But it doth not become even those that have authority to be vouching and appealing to it upon every occasion, that doth but make it cheap and common; it is better give a convincing reason, as the father doth here; *it was meet* and very becoming *that we should make merry* for the return of a prodigal son, more than for the perseverance of a dutiful son; for though the latter be a great blessing to a family, yet the former is a more sensible pleasure. Any family would be much-transported with joy at the rising of a dead child to life, yea, or at the recovery of a child from a sickness that was adjudged mortal, than for the continual life and health of many children. Note, God will be justified when he speaks, and all flesh shall sooner or later be silent before him. We do not find any reply that the elder brother made to what his father said, which intimates that he was entirely satisfied, and acquiesced in his father's will, and was well reconciled to his prodigal brother; and his father put him in mind that he was his brother: *this thy brother*. Note, A good man, though he have not such command of himself at all times as to keep his temper, yet will, with the grace of God, recover his temper, though he fall, yet shall he not be utterly cast down. But as for the Scribes and Pharisees, for whose conviction it was primarily intended, for aught appears they continued the same disposition to the fineness of the Gentiles, and to the gospel of Christ because it was preached to them.

C H A P. XVI.

The scope of Christ's discourse in this chapter, is to awaken and quicken us all, so to use this world as not to abuse it; so to manage all our possessions and enjoyments here, as that they may make for us, and may not make against us in the other world; for they will do either the one or the other, according as we use them now. (1.) If we do good with them, and lay out what we have in works of piety and charity, we shall reap the benefit of it in the world to come; and this he shews in the parable of the unjust steward, who made so good a band of the lord's goods, as that when he was turned out of his stewardship, he had a comfortable subsistence to betake himself to: The parable is, *If we have*, ver. 1—8. The reduction and application of it, ver. 9—13. And the contempt which the Pharisees put upon the doctrine Christ preached to them, for which he sharply reproveth them, adding some other weighty sayings, ver. 14—18. (2.) If instead of doing good with our worldly enjoyments, we make them the food and fuel of our lusts, of our luxury and sensuality, and deny relief to the poor, we shall certainly perish eternally, and the things of this world which were thus abused, will but add to our misery and torment: This he shews, in the other parable of the rich man and Lazarus, which has likewise a further reach, and that is to awaken us all to take the warning given us by the written word, and to expect immediate messages from the other world, ver. 19—31.

1. **A**ND he said unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. 2. And he called him; and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. 3. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. 4. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. 5. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? 6. And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. 7. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, an hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourcore. 8. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. 9. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. 10. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. 11. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mam-

mon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? 12. And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? 13. ¶ No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. 14. And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him. 15. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. 16. The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. 17. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail. 18. Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.

We mistake if we imagine that the design of Christ's doctrine and holy religion was either to amuse us with notions of divine mysteries, or to entertain us with notions of divine mercies: No, the divine revelation of both these in the gospel is intended to engage and quicken us to the practice of Christian duties, and as much as any one thing to the duty of beneficence, and doing good to those who stand in need of any thing that either we have or can do for them. This our Saviour is here pressing us to, by minding us that we are but *stewards of the manifold grace of God*: and since we have in divers instances been unfaithful, and have forfeited the favour of our Lord, it is our wisdom to think how we may, some other way, make what we have in the world turn to a good account. Parables must not be forced beyond their primary intention, and therefore we must not hence infer that any one can befriend us if we lie under the displeasure of our Lord; but that in the general we must so lay out what we have in works of piety and charity, as that we may meet it again with comfort on the other side death and the grave. If we would act wisely, we must be as diligent and industrious to employ our riches in the acts of piety and charity, in order to promote our future and eternal welfare, as worldly men are in laying them out to the greatest temporal profit, in making to themselves friends with him, and securing other secular interests. So Dr. Clarke.

Now let us consider,

First, The parable itself, in which all the children of men are represented as *stewards* of what they have in this world, and we are but stewards; whatever we have, the property of it is God's, we have only the use of it, and that according to the direction of our great Lord, and for his honour. Rabbi Kimchi, quoted by Dr. Lightfoot, saith, "This world is a house; heaven, the roof; the stars, the lights; the earth with its fruits, a table spread: The Master of the house is the holy and blessed God; man is the steward, into whose hands the goods of this house are delivered; if he behave himself well, he shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord; if not, he shall be turned out of his stewardship." Now,

1. Here is the *dishonesty* of this steward. He wasted his lord's goods, embzzled them, misapplied them, or through carelessness suffered them to be lost and damaged; and for this he was accused to his lord, ver. 1. We are all liable to the same charges, we have not made a due improvement of what God has intrusted us with in this world, but have perverted it's purpose. And that we may not be for this judged of our Lord, it concerns us to judge ourselves.

2. His discharge out of his place. His lord called for him, and said, *How is it that I hear this of thee?* I expected better things, from thee: He speaks as one sorry to find himself disappointed in him, and under a necessity of dismissing him from his service: It troubles him to hear it, but the steward cannot deny it, and therefore there is no remedy, he must make up his accounts and be gone in a little time, ver. 2. Now this is designed to teach us, (1.) That we must all of us shortly be discharged from our stewardship in this world; we must not always enjoy those things we now enjoy: Death will come and dismiss us from our stewardship, will deprive us of the abilities and opportunities we now have of doing good, and others will come in our places, and have the same. (2.) That our discharge from our stewardship at death is just, and what we have deserved, for we have wasted our Lord's goods, and thereby forfeited our trust, so that we cannot complain of any wrong done us. (3.) That when our stewardship is taken from us, we must give an account of it to our Lord; after death the judgment; both which, both our discharge and our account we are fairly warned of, and ought to be frequently thinking of.

3. His after-wisdom; now he began to consider, *What shall I do?* ver. 3. He would have done well to have considered that before he had so foolishly thrown himself out of a good place by his unfaithfulness; but it is better to consider late than never. Note, Since we have all received notice that we must shortly be turned out of our stewardship, we are concerned to consider what we shall do then? He must live; which way shall we have a livelihood? (1.) He knows he has not such a degree of industry in him, as to get his living by work; *I cannot dig*; I cannot earn my bread by my labour; but why can he not dig? It doth not appear that he was either old or lame, but the truth is he is *lazy*; his *cannot* is a *will not*; it is not a natural but a moral disability that he labours under; if his master, when he turned him out of the stewardship had continued him in his service as a labourer, and set a task-master over him, he would have made him dig. He *cannot dig*, for he was never used to it; now this intimates, that we cannot get a livelihood for our souls by any labour for this world; nor indeed can do any thing to purpose for our souls by any ability of our own.

(2.) He knows he has not such a degree of *humility* as to get his bread by begging; *to beg I am ashamed*. This was the language of his pride, as the former of his slothfulness; those whom God, in his providence, has disabled to help themselves, should not be ashamed to ask relief of others. This steward had more reason to be ashamed of his cheating his master than of begging his bread.

(3.) He therefore determines to make friends of his lord's debtors, or his tenants that were behind of their rent, and had given notes under their hands for it, ver. 4. *I am resolved what to do*. My lord turns me out of his house, I have none of my own to go to, I am acquainted with my lord's tenants, have done them many a good turn, and now I will do them one more, which will oblige them, that they will bid me welcome to their houses and the best entertainment they afford; and so long as I live, at least till I can better dispose of myself, I will quarter upon them, and go from

from one good house to another. Now the way he would take to make them his friends, was by striking off a considerable part of their debt to his lord, and giving it in his accounts so much less than it was. Accordingly he sent for one that owed his lord a hundred measures of oil, in that commodity he paid his rent; *Take this bill, said he, here it is, and sit down quickly, and write fifty,* ver. 6. so he reduced his debt to the one half. Observe, He was in hopes to have it done, *fit down quickly* and do it, lest we be taken treating and suspected. He took another that owed his lord an hundred measures of wheat, and from his bill he cut off a fifth part, and bid him write *four score*, ver. 7. and probably he did the like by others; abating more or less according as he expected kindness from them. See here what uncertain things our worldly possessions are; and most so to those that have most of them, who devolve upon others all the care concerning them, and so put it into their power to cheat them, because they will not trouble themselves to see with their own eyes. See also what treachery it is to be found, even among those in whom trust is reposed. How hard is it to find one that a confidence can be reposed in? Let God be true, but every man a liar. Though this steward is turned out for dealing dishonestly, yet still he doth so. So rare is it for men to mend of a fault, though they smart for it.

4. The approbation of this, ver. 8. *The Lord commanded the unjust steward, because he had done wisely.* Whether it be meant of his lord, the lord of that servant, who, though he could not but be angry at his knavery, yet was pleased with his ingenuity and policy for himself; but taking it so, the latter part of the verse must be the words of our Lord, and therefore I think the whole is meant of him. Christ did, as it were, say, Now commend me to such a man as this, that knows how to do well for himself, how to improve a present opportunity, and how to provide for a future necessity. He doth not commend him because he had done *wisely* to his master, but because he had done *wisely* for himself. Yet perhaps herein he did well for his master too, and but justly with the tenants. He knew what *hard bargains* he had *set them*, so that they could not pay their rent; but having been screwed up by his rigour were thrown *behind hand*, and they and their families were likely to go to ruin; and in consideration of this, he now at going off did as he ought to do both in justice and charity, not only easing them of part of their arrears, but abating of their rent for the future. *How much owest thou?* may be meant, what rent dost thou sit upon? Come, faith he, I will let thee an easier bargain, and yet no easier than what thou oughtest to have. He had been *all for his lord*, but now he begins to consider the tenants, that he might have their favour when he had lost his lord's. The abating of their rent would be a lasting kindness, and more likely to engage them than abating their arrears only.

Now this forecast of his, for a comfortable subsistence in this world, shames our imprudence for another world. *The children of this world*, that choose and have their portion in it, are *wiser for their generation*, act more considerately, and better consult their worldly interest and advantage, than the *children of light*, who enjoy the gospel, in their generation, i. e. in the concerns of their souls and eternity. Note, 1. The wisdom of worldly people in the concerns of this world, is to be imitated by us in the concerns of our souls; it is their principles to improve their opportunities: to do that first which is most needful; in summer and harvest to lay up for winter; to take a good bargain when it is offered them; to trust the faithful and not the false; O that we were thus wise in our spiritual affairs! 2. The children of light are commonly *outdone* by the children of this world. Not that the children of this world are *truly wise*, but only in their generation; but in that they are *wiser than the children of light in theirs*; for though we are told that we must shortly be turned out of our stewardship, yet we do not provide as we should for such a day; we live as if we were to be here *always*, and as if there were not *another life after this*; and are not solicitous as this steward was to provide for *hereafter*; though as *children of the light*, that light to which life and immortality are brought by the gospel, we cannot but see *another world* before us, yet do not prepare for it, do not send our best effects and best affections thither, as we should.

5. The application of this parable, and the inferences drawn from it, ver. 9. *I say unto you*, you my disciples, for to them this parable is directed, ver. 1. Though you have but little in this world, consider how you may do good with that little: Observe,

(1.) What is it that our Lord Jesus here exhorts us to; to provide for our comfortable reception to the happiness of another world, by making good use of our possessions and enjoyments in this world; *Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness*, as the steward with his lord's goods made his lord's tenants his friends. It is the wisdom of the men of this world to manage their money, as that they may have the benefit of it hereafter, and not for the present only; therefore they put it out to interest, buy land with it, put it into this or the other fund. Now we should learn of them to make use of our money, so as that we may be the better for it hereafter, in another world, as they do, in hopes to be the better for it hereafter in this world; so *cast it upon the waters*, as that we may find it again *after many days*, Eccles. xi. 1. And in our case, though whatever we have is our Lord's goods; yet as long as we dispose of them among our Lord's tenants and for their advantage, it is so far reckoned from being a wrong to our Lord, that it is duty to him as well as policy for ourselves.

Note, 1. The things of this world are the *mammon of unrighteousness* or the *false mammon*; not only because often got by fraud and unrighteousness, but because those who trust to it for satisfaction and happiness will certainly be deceived; for riches are perishing things, and will disappoint those that raise their expectations from them. 2. Though this *mammon of unrighteousness* is not to be trusted to for a happiness, yet it may and must be made use of in suberviency to our pursuits of that which is our happiness. Though we cannot find true satisfaction in it, yet we may make to ourselves friends with it, not by way of purchase or merit but recommendation; so we may make God and Christ our friends, the good angels and saints our friends, and the poor our friends; and it is a desirable thing to be befriended in the account and state to come. 3. At death we must all fail, *or as an eclipse, when he suffer an eclipse*. Death eclipseth us. A tradesman is said to fail when he becomes a bankrupt; we must all thus fail shortly; death shuts up the shop, seals up the hand. Our comforts and enjoyments on earth will all fail us; flesh and heart fail. 4. It ought to be our great concern to make it sure to ourselves, that *when we fail at death* we may be received into everlasting habitation in heaven. The habitations in heaven are everlasting; not made with hands, but eternal, 2 Cor. v. 1. Christ is gone before to prepare a place for those that are his, and is there ready to receive them; the bosom of Abraham is ready to receive them, and when a guard of angels carries them thither, a choir of angels is ready to receive them there. The poor saints that are gone before to glory, will receive those that in this world distributed to their necessities. 5. This is a good reason why we should use what we have in the world for the honour of God and the good of our brethren, that thus we may with him lay up in store a good bond, a good security, a good foundation for the time to come, for an eternity to come: See 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19, which explains this here.

(2.) With what arguments he presseth this exhortation; he abounds in works of piety and charity.

1. If we do not make a right use of the gifts of God's providence, how can we expect from him those present and future comforts which are the gifts of his spiritual grace? Our Saviour here compares these, and shews that though our faithful use of the things of this world cannot be thought to merit any favour at the hand of God, yet our unfaithfulness in the use of them may be justly reckoned a forfeiture of that grace which is necessary to bring us to glory, and that is it which our Saviour here shews, ver. 10, 11, 12.

(1.) The riches of this world are the *left*; grace and glory are the *greater*: Now if we be unfaithful in the left, if we use the things in this world to other purposes than those for which they were given us, it may justly be feared we shall be so in the gifts of God's grace, that we will receive them also in vain, and therefore they will be denied us. *He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much.* He that serves God and doth good with his money, will serve God and do good with the more noble and valuable talents of wisdom and grace, and spiritual gifts and the earnestness of heaven; but he that buries the *one talent* of this world's wealth, will never improve the *few talents* of spiritual riches. God withholdeth his grace from covetous worldly people more than we are aware of.

(2.) The riches of this world are *deceitful* and *uncertain*, it is the *unrighteous mammon*, which is lusting from us apace, and which, if we will make any advantage of, we must bestir ourselves quickly; but if we do not, how can we expect to be intrusted with spiritual riches, which are the only true riches? ver. 11. Let us be convinced of this, that those are *truly rich*, and *very rich*, who are rich in faith, and rich towards God, rich in Christ, and in the promises, and in the earnestness of heaven; and therefore let us lay up our treasure in them, and expect our portion from them, and mind them in the first place, the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and then, if other things be added to us, use them in ordine ad spiritualia, so as that by using them well we may take the faster hold of *true riches*, and may be qualified to receive yet more grace from God; for God giveth to a man that is good in his sight, that is, to a free-hearted charitable man, wisdom and knowledge, and joy, Eccles. ii. 27. that is, to a man that is *justly in the righteous mammon*, he gives the true riches.

(3.) The riches of this world are *another man's*; they are *το αλλοτρία*, not our own, for they are foreign to the soul and its nature and interest: They are not our own, for they are God's, his title to them is prior and superior to ours; the property remains in him, we are but usufructuaries; they are *another man's*, we have them from others; we use them for others; and what good has the owner from his goods that increase, save the beholding of them with his eyes, while still they are increased that eat them: and we must shortly leave them to others, and we know not who? But spiritual and eternal riches are our own, they enter into the soul that becomes possessed of them, and inseparably; they are a good part that will never be taken away from us: If we make Christ our own, and the promises our own, and heaven our own, we have that which we may truly call our own. But how can we expect God should enrich us with these, if we do not serve him with our worldly possessions, which we are but stewards of?

2. We have no other way to prove ourselves the servants of God, but by giving up ourselves so entirely to his service as to make *mammon*, that is, all our worldly gain, serviceable to us in his service, ver. 13. No servant can serve two masters, whose commands are so inconsistent as those of God and mammon are. If a man will love the world and hold to that, it cannot be but he will hate God and despise him: He will make all his pretensions of religion truckle to his secular interests and designs, and the thing of God shall be made to help him in serving and seeking the world; but on the other hand, if a man will love God and adhere to him, he will comparatively hate the world (whenever God and the world come in competition) and will despise it, and make all his business and success in the world some way or other conducive to the furtherance of him in the business of religion; and the things of the world shall be made to help him in serving God and working out his salvation. The matter is here laid plainly before us, *Ye cannot serve God and mammon*. So divided are their interests, that their services can never be compounded. If therefore we be determined to serve God, we must disclaim and abjure the service of the world.

(3.) We are here told what entertainment this doctrine of Christ met with among the Pharisees, and what rebuke he gave them.

1. They wickedly ridiculed him, ver. 14. *The Pharisees who were covetous heard all these things, and could not contradict him, but they derided him.* Let us consider this, (1.) As their sin, and the fruit of their covetousness, which was their reigning sin, their own iniquity. Note, Many that make a great profession of religion, have much knowledge, and abound in the exercise of devotion, yet are ruined by the love of the world; nor doth any thing harden the heart more against the word of Christ. These covetous Pharisees could not bear to have that touched which was their *Delilah*, their darling lust, for this they derided him, *εὐφρανεντες αὐτον*, they snuffed up their noses at him, or blew their noses on him. It is an expression of the utmost scorn and disdain imaginable; *the word of the Lord was to them a reproach*, Jer. vi. 10. They laughed at him for going so contrary to the opinion and way of the world, for endeavouring to recover them from a sin which they were resolved to hold fast. Note, It is common for those to make a jest of the word of God, who are resolved they will not be ruled by it, but they will find at last, it cannot be turned off so. (2.) As his suffering. Our Lord Jesus endured not only the contradiction of fingers, but their contempt, they laid him in derision all the day. He that spake as never man spake, yet was bantered and ridiculed, that his faithful ministers, whose preaching is unjustly derided, may not be disheartened at. Is it no disgrace to a man to be laughed at, but to deserve to be laughed at? Christ's apostles were mocked, and no wonder, the disciple is not greater than his Lord.

2. He justly reproveth them; not for deriding him, he knew how to despise the shame; but for deriding themselves with the shews and colours of piety, when they were strangers to the power of it, ver. 15. Here is,

(1.) Their specious outside; nay, it was a splendid one: (1.) They justified themselves before men, they denied whatever ill was laid to their charge, even by Christ himself: They claimed to be looked upon as men of singular sanctity and devotion, and justified themselves in that claim. *You are they that do that so as none ever did*, that make it your business to court the opinion of men, and right or wrong will justify yourselves before the world, so you are notorious for this. (2.) They were highly esteemed among men; men did not only acquit them from any blame they were under, but applauded them and had them in veneration, not only as good men but as the best of men; Their sentiments were esteemed as oracles, their direction as laws, and their practices as inviolable prescriptions.

(2.) Their odious inside, which was under the eye of God: He knows your heart, and it is in his sight an abomination, for it is full of all manner of wickedness. Note, 1. It is folly to justify ourselves before men, and to think this enough to bear us out, and bring us off in the judgement of the great day, that men know no ill by us, for God, who knows our hearts, knows

that ill by us which no one else can know. This ought to check our value for ourselves, and our confidence in ourselves, that *God knows our hearts* and how much deceit is there, for we have reason to abate and distrust ourselves. 2. It is folly to judge of persons and things by the opinion of men concerning them, and to go down with the stream of vulgar estimate; for that which is *highly esteemed among men*, who judge according to outward appearance, is perhaps an *abomination in the sight of God*, who sees things as they are, and whose judgment we are sure is according to truth: And on the contrary there are those whom men despise and condemn, that are accepted and approved of God, 2 Cor. x. 18.

3. He turned from them to the publicans and sinners, as more likely to be wrought upon by his gospel than those covetous conceited Pharisees, ver. 16. The law and the prophets were indeed until John: The Old Testament dispensation which was confined to you Jews, continued till John Baptist appeared, and you seemed to have the monopoly of righteousness and salvation, and you are puffed up with this, and this gains you esteem among men, that you are students in the law and the prophets; but since John Baptist appeared, the kingdom of God is preached; a New Testament dispensation, which doth not value men at all for their being doctors of the law, but *every man presseth* into the Gospel kingdom. Gentiles as well as Jews; and no man thinks himself bound in good manners to let his betters go before him into it, or to stay till the rulers and the Pharisees have led him that way. It is not so much a political national constitution as the Jewish æconomy was, when *salvation was of the Jews*; but it is made a particular personal concern, and therefore *every man* that is convinced he has a soul to save, and an eternity to provide for, thrusts to get in, lest he should come short by trifling and complimenting. Some give this sense of it; they derided Christ for speaking in contempt of riches, for, thought they, were there not many promises of riches and other temporal good things in the law and the prophets? and were not many of the best of God's servants every rich, as Abraham and David? It is true, saith Christ, so it was, but now the kingdom of God is begun to be preached, things take a new turn; now blessed are the poor, and the mourners, and the persecuted. The Pharisees, to requite the people for their high opinion of them, allowed them in a cheap easy formal religion; but, with Christ, now the gospel is preached, the eyes of the people are opened, and as they cannot now have a veneration for the Pharisees as they have had, so they cannot content themselves with such an indifferency in religion as they had been trained up in, but they press with a holy violence into the kingdom of God. Note, those that would go to heaven must take pains, must strive against the stream, must press against the crowd that are going the contrary way.

4. Yet still he protests against any design to invalidate the law, ver. 17. *It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.* The moral law is confirmed and ratified, and not one tittle of that fails; the duties enjoined by it are duties still; the sins forbidden by it are sins still: Nay, the precepts of it are explained and enforced by the gospel, and made to appear more spiritual. The ceremonial law is perfected in the gospel, and its shades filled up with the golden hours; not one tittle of that fails, for it is printed off in the gospel, where though the force of it is as a law taken off, yet the figure of it as a type shines very bright, witness the epistle to the Hebrews. And there were some things which were connived at by the law, for the preventing of greater mischiefs, which the gospel has indeed taken away the permission of, but without any detriment or disparagement to the law, for it has thereby reduced them to the primitive intention of the law, as in the case of divorce, ver. 18. which we had before, Matt. v. 32—xix. 9. Christ will not allow divorces, for his gospel is intended to strike at the bitter root of men's corrupt appetites and passions, to kill them and pluck them up, and therefore they must not be so far indulged, as that permission did indulge them; for the more they are indulged, the more impetuous and headstrong they grow.

19. ¶ There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores, 21. And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores: 22. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23. And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue: for I tormented in this flame. 25. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulph fixed: so that they which would pass from hence, to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. 27. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house: 28. For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.

As the parable of the prodigal son set before us the grace of the gospel, which is encouraging to us all; so this sets before us the wrath to come, and is designed for our awakening; and very fast asleep those are in sin that will not be awakened by it. The Pharisees made a jest of Christ's sermon against worldliness; now this parable was intended to make those

mockers serious. The tendency of the gospel of Christ is both to reconcile us to poverty and affliction, and to arm us against temptations to worldliness and sensuality: Now this parable by drawing the curtain, and letting us see what will be the end of both in the other world, goes very far in prosecuting those two great intentions.

This parable is not like Christ's other parables, in which spiritual things are represented by similitudes borrowed from worldly things, as those of the sower and the seed, except that of the sheep and the goats, the prodigal son, and indeed all the rest but this: But here the *spiritual things themselves* are represented in a narrative or description of the different state of good and bad in this world and the other: yet we need not call it a history of a particular occurrence, but it is *matter of fact* that is true every day; that poor godly people whom men neglect and trample upon, die away out of their miseries and go to heavenly bliss and joy, which is made the more pleasant to them by their preceding sorrows: and that rich epicures that live in luxury, and are unmerciful to the poor, die and go into a state of insupportable torment, which is the more grievous and terrible to them, because of the sensual lives they lived; and that there is no gaining any relief from their torments. Is this a parable? What similitude is there in this? The discourse indeed between Abraham and the rich man is only an illustration of the description, to make it the more affecting, like that between God and Satan in the story of Job. Our Saviour came to bring us acquainted with another world, and to shew us the reference which this world has to that; and here he doth it.

In this description (for so I shall choose to call it) we may observe, First, The different condition of a wicked rich man, and a godly poor man in this world. We know that as some of late, so the Jews of old, were ready to make prosperity one of the marks of a true church, of a good man and a favourite of heaven, so that they could hardly have any favourable thoughts of a poor man: This mistake Christ upon all occasions set himself to correct, and here very full: Where we have,

1. A wicked man, and one that will be for ever miserable in the height of prosperity, ver. 19. *There was a certain rich man*, from the Latin we commonly call him *Dives*, a rich man; but as Bishop Tillotson observes, he has no name given him, as the poor man has, because it had been invidious to have named any particular man in such a description as this, and apt to provoke and gain ill-will. But others observe, that Christ would not do the rich man so much honour as to name him, though when perhaps he called his lands by his own name, he thought it should long survive that of the beggar at his gate, which yet is here preserved, when that of the rich man is buried in oblivion. Now we are told concerning this rich man, (1.) That he was clothed in purple and fine linen, and that was his adorning. He had fine linen for pleasure, and clean and neat every day; night-linen and day-linen. He had purple for state, for that was the wear of princes; which has made some conjecture that Christ had an eye to Herod in it. He never appeared abroad but it was in great magnificence. (2.) He fared deliciously and sumptuously every day. His table was furnished with all the varieties and dainties that nature and art could furnish him with. His side-table richly adorned with plate, and his servants that waited at table in rich liveries, and the guests at his table no doubt such as he thought grand.

Well, and what harm was there in all this? It is no sin to be rich, no sin to wear purple and fine linen, nor to keep a plentiful table, if a man's estate will afford it. Nor are we told that he got his estate by fraud, oppression, or extortion, no, nor that he was drunk or made others drunk; but, (1.) Christ would hereby shew, that a man may have a great deal of the wealth and pomp and pleasure of this world, and yet lie and perish for ever under God's wrath and curse. We cannot infer from men's living great, either that God loves them, in giving them so much, or that they love God for giving them so much; happiness consists not in these things. (2.) That plenty and pleasure is a very dangerous, and to many a fatal temptation to luxury and sensuality, and forgetfulness of God and another world. This man might have been happy if he had not had great possession and enjoyments. (3.) That the indulgence of the body and the ease and pleasure of that, is the ruin of many a soul and the means of it. It is true, eating good meat and wearing good clothes is lawful; but it is as true that it often becomes the food and fuel of pride and luxury, and so turns into sin to us. (4.) That feasting ourselves and our friends, and at the same time forgetting the distressed of the poor and afflicted, is very provoking to God and damning to the soul. The sin of the rich man was not so much his dress or his diet, but his providing for himself only.

2. Here is a godly man, and one that will be for ever happy, in the depth of adversity and distress, ver. 20. *There was a certain beggar*, named Lazarus, a beggar of that name, eminently devout and in great distress, was probably well known among good people at that time: A beggar, suppose such a one as Eleazar or Lazarus. Some think Eleazar a proper name for any poor man, for it signifies the *help of God*, which they must fly to that are destitute of other helps. This poor man was reduced to the last extremity, as miserable as you can lightly suppose a man to be in this world as to outward things. (1.) His body was full of sores like Job. To be sick and weak in body is a great affliction; but fires are more painful to the patient and more loathsome to those about him. (2.) He was forced to beg his bread, and to take up with such scraps as he could not go himself, but he was carried by some compassionate hand or other, and laid at the rich man's gate. Note, Those that are not able to help the poor with their purses, should help them with their pains; that cannot lend them a penny, should lend them a hand; that have not wherewithal to give to them themselves, should either bring them or go for them to those that have. Lazarus in his distress had nothing of his own to subsist on, no relation to go to, nor did the parish take care of him. It is an instance of the degeneracy of the Jewish church at this time, that such a godly man as Lazarus was should be suffered to perish for want of necessary food. Now observe,

1. His expectations from the rich man's table; he desired to be fed with the crumbs, ver. 21. He did not look for a morsel from off his table, though he ought to have had one, one of the best; but would be thankful for the crumbs from under the table, the broken meat which was the rich man's leavings; nay, the leavings of his dogs. The poor use intreaties, and must be content with such as they can get. Now this is taken notice of to shew, (1.) What was the distress and what the disposition of the poor man. He was poor, but he was poor in spirit, contentedly poor. He did not lie at the rich man's gate complaining and bawling and making a noise, but silently and modestly desiring to be fed with the crumbs. This miserable man was a good man and in favour with God. Note, It is often the lot of some of the dearest of God's saints and servants to be greatly afflicted in this world, while wicked people prosper and have abundance; see Psalm lxxiii. 7, 10, 14. Here is a child of wrath and an heir of hell sitting in the house, faring sumptuously; and a child of love and an heir of heaven lying at the gate perishing for hunger. And is men's spiritual state to be judged of then by their outward condition? What was the temper of the rich man towards him; we are not told that he abused him or forbade him his gate, or did him

any harm, but it is intimated that he slighted him; he had no concern for him; took no care about him. Here was a *real* object of charity, and a very moving one, which spoke for itself; it was presented to him at his own gate; the poor man had a good character and a good carriage, and every thing that could recommend him: A little thing would be a great kindness to him, and yet he took no cognizance of his case, did not order him to be taken in and lodged in the barn or some of the out-buildings, but let him lie there. Note, It is not enough not to oppress and trample upon the poor, we shall be found unfaithful stewards of our Lord's goods in the great day if we do not succour and relieve them. The reason given for the most fearful doom is, *I was hungry, and you gave me no meat*. I wonder how those rich people that have read the gospel of Christ, and say they believe it, can be so unconcerned as they often are in the necessities and miseries of the poor and afflicted!

2. The usage he had from the dogs. *The dogs came and licked his sores*. The rich man kept a kennel of hounds it may be or other dogs, for his diversion and to please his fancy, and those were fed to the full, when poor Lazarus could not get enough to keep him alive. Note, Those will have a great deal to answer for hereafter, that feed their dogs but neglect the poor: And it is a great aggravation of the uncharitableness of many rich people, that they bestow that upon their fancies and follies which would supply the necessity and rejoice the heart of many a good Christian in distress. Those offend God, nay, and they put a contempt upon the human nature, that pamper their dogs and horses, and let the families of their poor neighbours starve. Now those dogs came and licked the sores of poor Lazarus, which may be taken, (1.) As an aggravation of his misery: His sores were bloody, which tempted the dogs to come and lick them as they did the blood of Naboth and Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 19. And we read of the tongue of the dogs dipped in the blood of enemies, Psalm lxxviii. 22. They attacked him while he was yet alive, as if he had been already dead, and he had not strength himself to keep them off, nor would any of the servants be so civil as to check them. The dogs were like their master, and thought they fared sumptuously when they regaled themselves with human gore: Or it may be taken, (2.) As some relief to him in his misery, *αλλα και*, the master was hard-hearted towards him, but the dogs came and licked his sores, which mollified and eased them; it is not said they sucked them but licked them, which was good for them. The dogs were more kind to him than their master was.

Secondly, Here is the different condition of this godly poor man, and this wicked rich man, at and after death. Hitherto the wicked man seems to have the advantage, but *exitus acta probat*. Let us wait a while to see the end thereof.

1. They both died, ver. 22. The beggar died. The rich man also died. Death is the common lot of rich and poor, godly and ungodly, there they meet together. One dieth in his full strength, and another in the bitterness of his soul, but they shall lie down alike in the dust, Job xxi. 26. Death favours not either the rich man for his riches, or the poor man for his poverty. Saints die that they may begin their sorrows to an end, and may enter upon their joys: Sinners that they may go to give up their account. It concerns both rich and poor to prepare for death, for it waits for them both. *Mors superstra legionibus, aquat; aequo pulsat pede pruperum tabernus, regumque turres*.

2. The beggar died first: God many times takes godly people out of the world when he leaves the wicked to flourish still. It was an advantage to the beggar that such a speedy end was put to his miseries, and since he could find no other shelter or resting-place, he was *hid in the grave*, where the weary are at rest.

3. The rich man died and was buried. Nothing is said of the interment of the poor man, they digged a hole any where and tumbled his body in without any solemnity; he was buried with the burial of an ass: Nay, it is well if they that let the dogs lick his sores did not let them grow his bones. But the rich man had a pompous funeral, lay in state, had a train of mourners to attend him to the grave, and a stately monument set up over it; probably he had a funeral oration in praise of him, and his generous way of living and the good table he kept, which these would commend that had been feasted at it. It is said of the wicked man, that he is brought to the grave with no small ado, and laid in the tomb, and the clods of the valley, were it possible, and made sweet to him, Job xxi. 32, 33. How foreign is the ceremony of a funeral to the happiness of the man!

4. The beggar died and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. How much did the honour done to his soul, by this convey of it to its rest, exceed the honour done to the rich man by the carrying of his body with so much magnificence to its grave? Observe, (1.) His soul existed in a state of separation from its body. It did not die or fall asleep with the body, his candle was not put out with him, but lived and acted, and knew what it did and what was done to it. (2.) His soul removed to another world, to the world of spirits; it returned to God who gave it, to its native country; this is implied by its being carried. The spirit of man goes upward. (3.) Angels took care of it, it was carried by angels. They are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, not only while they live but when they die, and have a charge concerning them, to bear them up in their hands, not only in their journeys to and fro on earth, but in their great journey to their long home in heaven, to be both their guide and their guard through regions unknown and unsafe. The soul of man, if not chained to this earth and clogged by it as un sanctified souls are, has in itself an elastic virtue, by which it springs upward, as soon as it get clear of the body; but Christ will not trust those that are his to that, and therefore will send special messengers to fetch them to himself. One angel one would think sufficient, but here are more, as many were sent for Elijah. Amasis king of Egypt had his chariot drawn by kings, but what was that honour to this? Saints ascend in the virtue of Christ's ascension; but this convoy of angels is added for state and decorum; saints shall be brought home, not only safely but honourably. What were the bearers at the rich man's funeral, though probably those of the first rank, compared with Lazarus's bearers? The angels were not shy of touching him, for his sores were on his body, not on his soul, that was presented to God without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Now, blessed angels, said a good man just expiring, now come and do your office. (4.) It was carried into Abraham's bosom. The Jews expressed the happiness of the righteous at death three ways; they go to the garden of Eden; they go to be under the throne of glory; and they go to the bosom of Abraham; and that is it our Saviour here makes use of. Abraham was the father of the faithful; and whither should the souls of the faithful be gathered but to him, who, as a tender father lays them in his bosom, especially at their first coming, to bid them welcome, and to refresh them when newly come from the sorrows and fatigues of this world? He was carried to his bosom, i. e. to feast with him, for at least the guests are said to lean on one another's breasts; and the saints in heaven sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. Abraham was a great and rich man, yet in heaven he doth not disdain to lay poor Lazarus in his bosom. Rich saints and poor meet in heaven. This poor Lazarus, that might be not admitted within the rich man's gate, is conducted into the dining-room, into the bed-chamber of the heavenly palace, and he is laid in the bosom of Abraham, whom the rich glutton scorned to set with the dogs of his flock.

5. The next news you hear of the rich man, after the account of his death and burial, is, that in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torment, ver. 23.

1. His state is very miserable. *He is in hell, in hades*, in the state of separate souls, and there he is in the utmost misery and anguish possible. As the souls of the faithful, immediately after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity; so wicked and un sanctified souls immediately after they are fetched from the pleasures of the flesh by death in misery and torment endless, useless, and remediless, and which will be much increased and completed at the resurrection. This rich man had entirely devoted himself to the pleasures of the world of sense, was wholly taken up with them, and took up with them for his portion, and there was wholly unfit for the pleasures of the world of spirits; and to such a carnal mind as his they would indeed be no pleasure, nor could he have any relish of them, and therefore he is of course excluded from them. Yet that is not all, he was hard-hearted to God's poor, and therefore he is not only cut off from mercy, but he has judgment without mercy, and falls under a punishment of sense as well as a punishment of loss.

2. The misery of his state is aggravated by his knowledge of the happiness of Lazarus. He lifts up his eyes, and sees Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. It is the soul that is in torment, and they are the eyes of the mind that are lifted up: He now began to consider what was become of Lazarus, he doth not find him where he is, nay, plainly sees him, and with as much assurance as if he had seen him with his bodily eyes, afar off in the bosom of Abraham. This same aggravation of the miseries of the damned we had before, chap. xiii. 28. *Ye shall see Abraham, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out*. (1.) He saw Abraham afar off. To see Abraham we would think a pleasing sight: but to see him afar off was a tormenting sight. Near himself he saw devils and damned companions, frightful sights and painful ones; afar off he saw Abraham. Note, Every sight in hell is aggravating. (2.) He saw Lazarus in his bosom, the same Lazarus whom he looked upon with so much scorn and contempt as not worthy his notice, he now sees preferred, and to be envied. The sight of him brought to his mind his own cruel and barbarous carriage towards him; and the sight of him in that happiness made his own misery the more grievous.

Thirdly, Here is an account of what passed between the rich man and Abraham in the separate state, a state of separation one from another, and of both from this world: And though it is probable there will not be, nor are any such dialogues or discourses between glorified saints and damned sinners, yet it is very proper, and what is usually done in descriptions, especially such as are designed to be pathetic and moving, by such dialogues to represent what will be the mind and sentiments both of the one and of the other. And since we find damned sinners tormented in the presence of the Lamb, Rev. xiv. 10. and the faithful servants of God looking upon them that have transgressed the covenant, there were their worm dies not, and their fire is not quenched, 1st. lvi. 23, 54. Such a discourse as this is not incongruous to be supposed.

Now in this discourse we have,

1. The request which the rich man made to Abraham for some mitigation of his present misery, ver. 24. Seeing Abraham afar off, he cried to him, cried aloud, as one in earnest, and as one in pain and misery, mixing shrieks with his petitions, to enforce them by moving compassion. He that used to command aloud now begs aloud: louder than ever Lazarus did at his gate. The songs of his riot and revels are all turned into lamentations. Observe here,

(1.) The titles he gives to Abraham; *Father Abraham*. Note, There are many in hell that can call Abraham father; that were Abraham's seed after the flesh: Nay, and many that were in name and profession the children of the covenant made with Abraham. Perhaps this rich man, in his carnal mirth, had ridiculed Abraham and the story of Abraham, as the scoffers of the latter days do; but now he gives him a title of respect, *father Abraham*. Note, The day is coming when wicked men will be glad to scrape acquaintance with the righteous, and to claim kindred to them, though now they slight them. Abraham in this description represents Christ, for to him all judgment is committed, and it is his mind that Abraham here speaks. Those that now slight Christ will shortly make their court to him, *Lord, Lord*.

(2.) The representation he makes to him of his present deplorable condition; *I am tormented in this flame*. It is the torment of his soul that he complains of, and therefore such a fire as will operate upon souls; and such a fire of the wrath of God is, fastening up in a guilty conscience; such a fire horror of mind is, and the reproaching of a self-accusing, self-condemning heart. Nothing more painful and terrible to the body than to be tormented with fire; by that therefore the miseries and agonies of damned souls are represented.

(3.) His request to Abraham in consideration of this misery; *Have mercy upon me*. Note, The day is coming when those that make light of divine mercy will beg hard for it. O for mercy, mercy, when the day of mercy is over, and offers of mercy no more made. He that had no mercy on Lazarus, yet expects Lazarus should have mercy on him, for, thinks he, Lazarus is better natured than ever I was. The particular favour he begs is, *Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue*. (1.) Here he complains of the torment of his tongue particularly, as if he were more tormented there than in any other part, the punishment answering the sin. The tongue is one of the organs of speech, and by the torment of that he is put in mind of all the wicked words that he had spoken against God and man; his cursing and swearing and blasphemy, all his hard speeches and filthy speeches; by his words he is condemned, and therefore in his tongue he is tormented. The tongue is also one of the organs of tasting; and therefore the torments of that will mind him of his inordinate relish of the delights of sense which he had rolled under his tongue. (2.) He desires a drop of water to cool his tongue. He doth not say, Father Abraham, send for me to thy bosom, to lie where Lazarus lies; un sanctified souls do not, cannot truly desire the happiness of heaven: Nay, he doth not say, Father Abraham, order me a release from this misery, help me out of this pit, for he utterly despaired of that; but he asks as small a thing as could be asked, a drop of water to cool his tongue for one moment. (3.) He desires that Lazarus might bring it. I have sometimes suspected that he had herein an ill design upon Lazarus, and hoped, if he could get him within his reach, he would keep him from returning to the bosom of Abraham again. The heart that is filled with rage against God is filled with rage against the people of God. But we will think more charitably even of a damned sinner, and suppose he intended here to shew respect to Lazarus as one whom he would now gladly be beholden to. He names him, because he knows him, and thinks Lazarus will not be unwilling to do him this good office for old acquaintance sake. Grotius here quotes Plato describing the torments of wicked souls, and among other things he saith they are continually raving on those whom they have murdered, or been any way injurious to, calling upon them to forgive them the wrongs they did them. Note, There is a day coming when those who now hate and despise the people of God would gladly receive kindness from them.

2. The reply which Abraham gave to this request: In general he did not grant it: He would not allow him one drop of water to cool his tongue. Note, The damned in hell shall not have any the least abatement or mitigation of their torment. If we now improve the day of our opportunities we may have a full and lasting satisfaction in the streams of mercy; but if we now slight the offer it will be in vain in hell to expect the least drop of mercy. See how justly this rich man is paid in his own coin. He that denieth a crumb is denied a drop. Now it is said to us, *Ask, and it shall be given you*; but if we let slip this accepted time, we may ask and it shall not be given us. But this is not all, had Abraham only said, you shall have nothing to abate your torment it had been said; but he saith a great deal which would add to his torment and make the flame the hotter, for every thing in hell will be tormenting.

(1.) He calls him *son*, a kind and civil title: but here serves only to aggravate the denial of his request, which shut up the bowels of the compassion of a father from him. He had been a son, but a rebellious one, and now an abandoned disinherited one. See the folly of those who rely on that *plea*, *We have Abraham to our father*, when we find one in hell, and likewise to be there for ever, whom Abraham calls *son*.

(2.) He puts him in mind of what had been both his own condition and the condition of Lazarus in their life-time. *Son, remember*, this is a cutting word. The memories of damned souls will be their tormentors, and conscience will then be awakened and stirred up to do its office, which here they would not suffer it to do. Nothing will bring more oil to the flames of hell than *son, remember*. Now sinners are called upon to remember, but they do not, they will not, they find ways to avoid it. *Son, remember thy Creator, thy Redeemer, remember thy latter end*; but they cannot turn a deaf ear to these mementos, and forget that for which they have their memories; justly therefore will their everlasting misery arise from a *son, remember*, which they will not be able to turn a deaf ear to. What a dreadful peal will this ring in our ears, *son, remember* the many warnings that were given thee, not to come to this place of torment, which thou wouldst not regard: remember the fair offers made thee of eternal life and glory, which thou wouldst not accept! But that which he is here put in mind of is, (1.) That thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things. He doth not tell him he had abused them, but he had received them. Remember what a bountiful benefactor God has been to thee, how ready he was to do thee good, thou canst not therefore say he owes thee any thing, no, not a drop of water. What he gave thee, thou receivedst, and that was all, thou never gavest him a receipt for them, in a thankful acknowledgment of them, much less didst thou ever make any grateful return for them or improvement of them; thou hast been the grave of God's blessings, on which they were buried, not the field of them, in which they were sown. Thou receivedst thy good things, i. e. thou receivedst them and usedst them, as if they had been thine own, and thou hadst not been at all accountable for them. Or rather, they were the things which thou didst choose for thy good things, which were in thine eyes the best things, which thou didst content thyself with the portion thyself in: Thou hadst meat and drink, and clothes of the richest and finest, and those were the things thou didst place thine happiness in, they were thy reward, thy consolation, and penny thou didst agree for, and thou hadst had it. Thou wast for the good things of thy life-time, and hadst no thought of better things in another life, and therefore hast no reason to expect them. The day of thy good things is past and gone, and now is the day of thine evil things, of recompence for all thine evil deeds. Thou hast already had the last drop of the vials of mercy, that thou couldst expect to fall to thy share; and there remains nothing but vials of wrath without mixture. (2.) Remember too what evil things Lazarus received. Thou enviest him his happiness here, but think what a large share of miseries he had in his life-time: Thou hadst as much good as could be thought to fall to the lot of so ill a man, and he as much evil as could be thought to fall to the lot of so good a man. He received his evil things, i. e. he bore them patiently, received them from the hand of God, as Job did, chap. ii. 10. *Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil also?* He received them as physic appointed for the cure of his spiritual distempers, and the cure was effected. As wicked people have good things only in this life, and at death they are for ever separated from all good; so godly people have evil things only in this life, and at death they are for ever put out of the reach of them. Now Abraham, by putting him in mind of both these together, awakening his conscience to mind him how he had carried it towards Lazarus when he was revelling in his good things, and Lazarus groaning under his evil things; he cannot forget that then he would not help Lazarus, and then how could he expect that Lazarus should now help him? Had Lazarus in his life-time afterwards grown rich and he poor, Lazarus would have thought it his duty to relieve him, and not to have upbraided him with his former unkindness: but in the future state of recompence and retribution, those that are now dealt with both by God and man better than they deserve, must expect to be rewarded every one according to his works.

(2.) He puts him in mind of Lazarus's present bliss, and his own misery. But now, the tables are turned, and so they must abide for ever, now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. He did not need to be told that he was tormented, he felt it to his cost; he knew likewise that one that lay in the bosom of Abraham could not but be comforted there; yet Abraham puts him in mind of it, that he might be comparing one thing with another observe the righteousness of God, in recompensing tribulation to them who trouble his people, and to those who are trouble, rest, 2 Thess. i. 6, 7. Observe, (1.) Heaven is comfort, and hell is torment: heaven is joy, hell is weeping and wailing, and pain in perfection. (2.) The soul as soon as it leaves the body, goes either to heaven or hell, to comfort or torment immediately, and doth not sleep or go into purgatory. (3.) Herein will be heaven indeed to those that go thither through many and great calamities in this world; those that had grace, but little of the comfort of it here, perhaps their souls refused to be comforted, yet when they are fallen asleep in Christ you may truly say, Now they are comforted: now all their tears are wiped away, and all their fears are vanished. In heaven there is everlasting consolation. And, on the other hand, hell will be hell indeed to those that go thither from the midst of the enjoyment of all the delights and pleasures of sense; to them the torture is the greater, as temporal calamities are described to be to the tender and delicate woman, that would not set so much as the sole of her foot to the ground for tenderness and delicacy, Deut. xxviii. 56.

(4.) He assures him it was to no purpose to think of having any relief by the misery of Lazarus: for, ver. 26. *Besides all this, worse yet, between us and you there is a great gulph fixed*, an impassable one. A great chasm, that so there can be no communication, between glorified saints and damned sinners. (1.) The kindest saint in heaven cannot make a visit to the congregation of the dead and damned to comfort or relieve any there, that when time was, were their friends. They that would pass from hence to you cannot: they cannot leave beholding the face of their Father, nor the work about his throne, to fetch water for you; that is no part of their business. (2.) The daringest sinner in hell cannot force his way out of that prison, cannot get over that great gulph. They cannot pass to us, that would come from thence. It was not to be expected, for the door of mercy is shut, the bridge

is drawn; there is no coming out upon parole or bail, no not for one hour. In this world blessed be God there is no gulph fixed between a state of nature and grace, but we may pass from the one to the other, from sin to God; but if we die in our sins, if we throw ourselves into the pit of destruction, there is no coming out. It is a pit in which there is no water, and out of which there is no redemption. The decree and counsel of God has fixed this gulph, which all the world cannot unfix. This abandons this miserable creature to despair: it is now too late for any change of his condition, or any the least relief: it might have been prevented in time, but it cannot now be remedied to eternity. The state of damned sinners is fixed by an irreverfible and unalterable sentence. A stone is rolled to the door of the pit, which cannot be rolled back.

3. The further request he had to make to his father Abraham; not for himself, his mouth is stopped, and he has not a word to say in answer to Abraham's denial of a drop of water: Damned sinners are made to know that the sentence they are under is just, and they cannot alleviate their own misery by making any objection against it. And since he cannot obtain a drop of water to cool his tongue, we may suppose he gnawed his tongue for pain, as those are said to do on whom one of the vials of God's wrath is poured out, Rev. xvi. 10. the hideous shrieks and wailings which we may suppose to be now uttered by him; but since he has an opportunity of speaking to Abraham, he will improve it for his relations whom he had left behind, since he cannot improve it for his own advantage. Now as to this,

1. He begs that Lazarus might be sent to his father's house, upon an errand thither, ver. 27. *I pray thee, therefore, Father*. Again he calls up to Abraham, and in this request he is importunate, *I pray thee*. O delay me not this. When he was on earth, he might have prayed and been heard, but now he prays in vain. Therefore because thou hast denied me the former request, surely thou wilt be so compassionate as not to deny this: or therefore, because there is a great gulph fixed, seeing there no getting out hence when they are once here, O send to prevent their coming thither. Or though there is a great gulph fixed between you and me, yet since there is no such gulph fixed between you and them, send him thither. Send him back to my father's house; he knows well enough where it is, has been there many a time, by the same token that he was denied the crumbs that fell from the table. He knows that I have five brethren there, if he appear to them they will know him, and will regard what he saith, for they knew him to be a non-st man; let him testify to them; let him tell them what condition I am in, and that I brought myself to it by my luxury and sensuality, and my unmercifulness to the poor. Let him warn them not to tread in my steps, nor to go in the way wherein I led them and left them, lest they also come into this place of torment, ver. 29. Some observes, that he speaks of five brethren only, whence they infer that he had no children, else he would have mentioned them, and then it was an aggravation of his uncharitableness that he had no children to provide for. Now he would have them stopped in their sinful course. He doth not say, give me leave to go to them, that I may testify to them, for he knew that there was a gulph fixed, and despaired of a permission so favourable to himself; his going would frighten them out of their wits, but send Lazarus, whose address will be less terrible, and yet his testimony sufficient to frighten them out of their sins.

Now he desired the preventing of their ruin, partly in tenderness to them, for whom he could not but retain a natural affection; he knew their temper, their temptations, their ignorance, their infidelity, their inconsideration, and wished to prevent the destruction they were running into. Partly in tenderness to himself, for their coming to him to that place of torment would but aggravate the misery to him, who had hoped to shew them the way thither, as the sight of Lazarus helped to aggravate his misery. When partners in sin come to be sharers in woe, as tares bound in bundles for the fire, they will be a terror to one another.

2. Abraham denies him this favour too. There is no request granted in hell: those who make the rich man's praying to Abraham a justification of their praying to saints departed, as they are far to seek for proofs, when the practice of a damned sinner must be valued for an example, so they have little encouragement to follow the example, when all his prayers were made in vain. Abraham leaves them to the testimony of Moses and the prophets, the ordinary means of conviction and conversion, they have the written word which they may read and hear read; let them attend to that sure word of prophecy, for God will not go out of the common method of his grace for them. Here is their privilege, they have Moses and the prophets, and their duty, let them hear them, and mix faith with them, and that will be sufficient to keep them from this place of torment. By this it appears that there is sufficient evidence in the Old Testament, in Moses and the prophets, to convince those that will hear them impartially, that there is another life after this, and a state of rewards and punishments for good and bad men; for that was the thing which the rich man would have his brethren assured of, and for that they are turned over to Moses and the prophets.

3. He urgeth his request yet further, ver. 30. *Now, Father Abraham, give me leave to press this*. It is true they have Moses and the prophets, and if they would but give a due regard to them, it would be sufficient; but they do not, they will not, yet it may be hoped, if one went to them from the dead, they would repent; that would be a more sensible conviction to them. They are used to Moses and the prophets and therefore regard them the less, but this would be a new thing, and more startling; surely that would bring them to repent, and to change their wicked habit and course of life. Note, Foolish men are apt to think any method of conviction better than that which God had chosen and appointed.

4. Abraham insists upon the denial of it, with a conclusive reason, ver. 31. *If they hear not Moses and the prophets*, and will not believe the testimony, nor take the warning they give, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead: If they regard not the public revelation which is confirmed by miracles, neither would they be wrought upon by a private testimony to themselves. (1.) The matter was long since settled upon trial, that God should speak by Moses and such prophets, and not by immediate messengers from heaven: Israel chose it in mount Sinai, because they could not bear the terrors of such expressions. (2.) A messenger from the dead could say no more than what is said in the scriptures, nor say it with more authority. (3.) There would be every jot as much reason to suspect that to be a cheat and a delusion, as to suspect the scriptures to be so, and much more; and infidels in one case would certainly be so in another. (4.) The same strength of corruption that break through the conviction of the written word, would certainly triumph over those by a witness from the dead: and though a sinner might be frightened at first by such a testimony, when the fright was over, he would soon return to his hardness. (5.) The scripture is now the ordinary way of God's making known his mind to us, and it is sufficient, and it is presumption for us to prescribe any other way, nor have we any ground to expect or pray for the grace of God to work upon us in any other way abstracted from that, and when that is rejected and set aside. This that our Saviour here said, was soon after verified in the unbelieving Jews, who would not hear Moses and the prophets, Christ and the apostles, and then would not be persuaded, though Lazarus rose from the dead; (and perhaps it was with some eye to him, that Christ named this poor man Lazarus)

I azarus) say, they consulted to put him to death, and did put him that raised him to death, and would not be persuaded by him neither, though he also rose from the dead. When Eutychus was raised to life, the people that were present continued to hear Paul preach, but did not turn to enquire of him, Acts xx. 10. 11. Let us not therefore desire visions and apparitions, nor seek to the dead, but to the *law and to the testimony*, 1Sa. viii. 19, 20. for that is the *sure word of prophecy*, which we may depend upon.

C H A P XVII.

In this chapter we have, (1.) Some particular discourses Christ had with his disciples, in which he teaches them to take heed of giving offence, and to forgive the injuries done them, ver. 1—4. Encourageth them to pray for the increase of their faith, ver. 5, 6. And then teacheth them humility, whatever service they had done for God, ver. 7—10. (2.) His cleansing of ten lepers, and the thanks he had from one of them only, and he a Samaritan, ver. 11—19 (3.) His discourse with his disciples upon occasion of an enquiry of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should appear, ver. 20—37.

1. **T**HEN said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come; but woe unto him through whom they come! 2. It were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. 3. ¶ Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. 4. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him. 5. And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. 6. And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye might say unto this sycamine-tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you. 7. But which of you, having a servant ploughing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? 8. And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken? and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? 9. Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. 10. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

We are here taught,

First, That giving offence is a great sin, and that which we should every one of us avoid, and carefully watch against, ver. 1, 2. We can expect no other, but that offences will come, considering the perverseness and forwardness that is in the nature of man, and the wise purpose and counsel of God, which will carry on his work even by those offences, and bring good out of evil. It is almost impossible but that offences will come, and therefore we are concerned to provide accordingly; but woe to him through whom they come, his doom will be heavy, ver. 2. more terrible than that of the worst of the malefactors, who are condemned to be thrown into the sea, for they perish under a load of guilt more ponderous than that of mill-stones.

This speaks a woe, (1.) To persecutors, that offer any injury to the least of Christ's little ones in word or deed, by which they are discouraged in serving Christ, and doing their duty, or in danger of being driven off from it. (2.) To seducers that corrupt the truths of Christ and his ordinances, and so trouble the minds of the disciples, for they are those by whom offences come. (3.) To those under the profession of the Christian name live scandalously, and thereby weaken the hands and sadden the hearts of God's people, for by them the offence comes; and it is no abatement of their guilt, nor will be any of their punishment, that it is impossible but offences will come.

Secondly, That forgiving offences is a great duty, and that which we should every one of us make conscience of, ver. 3. Take heed to yourselves. This may refer either to what goes before, or to what follows, Take heed that ye offend not one of these little ones. Ministers must be very careful, not to say or do any thing that may be a discouragement to weak Christians; there is need of great caution, and they ought to speak and act very considerately, for fear of this: or, when your brother trespasseth against you, doth you any injury, puts any slight or affront upon you, if he be accessory to any damage done you in your property or reputation, Take heed to yourselves at such a time, lest you be put into a passion, lest when your spirits are provoked, you speak unadvisedly, and rashly vow revenge, Prov. xxiv. 29. I will do so to him, as he has done to me. Take heed what you say at such a time, lest you say amiss.

(1.) If you are permitted to rebuke them, you are advised to do so: smother not the repentment, but give it vent, tell him his faults, shew him wherein he has not done well nor fairly by you, and it may be you will perceive (and you must be very willing to perceive it) that you mistook him, that it was not a trespass against you, or not designed, but an oversight, and then you will beg his pardon for misunderstanding him, as Josh. xxii. 30, 31.

(2.) You are commanded upon his repentance to forgive him, and to be perfectly reconciled to him: If he repent, forgive him; forget the injury, never think of it again, much less upbraid him with it. Though he do not repent, you must not therefore bear malice to him, or meditate revenge; but if he do not at least say he repents, you are not bound to be so free and familiar with him as you have been. If he be guilty of gross sin to the offence of the Christian community he is a member of, let him be gravely and mildly reproved for his sin, and upon his repentance received into friendship and communion again. This the apostle calls forgiveness, 2 Cor. ii. 7.

(3.) You are to repeat this every time he repeats his trespass, ver. 4. If he could be supposed to be either so negligent or so imprudent, as to trespass against thee seven times in a day, and as often professes himself sorry for his fault, and promiseth not again to offend in like manner, continue to forgive him. *Humanum est errare.* Note, Christians should be of a for-

giving spirit, willing to make the best of every body, and all about them easy; forward to extenuate faults, and not long to aggravate them, and should contrive as much to shew that they have forgiven an injury, as others to shew that they resent it.

Thirdly, That we have all need to get our faith strengthened, because as that grace grows, all other graces grow. The more firmly we believe the doctrine of Christ, and the more confidently we rely upon the grace of Christ, the better it will be with us every way. Now observe here;

1. The address which the disciples made to Christ for the strengthening of their faith, ver. 5. The apostles themselves, so they are here called, though they were prime ministers of state in Christ's kingdom, yet acknowledged the weakness and deficiency of their faith, and shew their need of Christ's grace for the improvement of it; they said unto the Lord, Increase our faith, and perfect what is lacking in it. Let the discoveries of faith be more clear, the desires of faith more strong, the dependencies of faith more firm and fixed, the dedications of faith more entire and resolute, and the delights of faith more pleasing. Note, The increase of our faith is what we should earnestly desire, and offer up that desire to God in prayer. Some think they put up this prayer to Christ, upon occasion of his pressing upon them the duty of forgiving injuries; Lord, increase our faith, or we shall never be able to practise such a difficult duty as this. Faith in God's pardoning mercy will enable us to get over the greatest difficulties that lie in the way of our forgiving our brother. Others think it was upon some other occasion, when the apostles were run aground in working some miracles, and were reproved by Christ for the weakness of their faith, as Matt. xvii. 16. To him that blamed them they must apply themselves for grace to mend them; to him they cry, Lord, increase our faith.

2. The assurance Christ gave them of the wonderful efficacy of true faith, ver. 6. If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, so small as mustard-seed, but yours is yet less than the least; or so sharp as mustard-seed, so pungent, so exciting to all other graces, as mustard to the animal spirits, and therefore, used in palsies, you might do wonders much beyond what you now do; nothing would be too hard for you, that were fit to be done for the glory of God, and the confirmation of the doctrine you preach, yea though it were the transplanting of a tree from the earth to the sea, see Matt. xvii. 29. As with God nothing is impossible, so are all things possible to him that can believe.

Fourthly, That whatever we do in the service of Christ, we must be very humble, and not imagine that we can merit any favour at his hand or claim it as a debt; even the apostles themselves, who did so much more for Christ than others, must not think they had thereby made him their debtor.

1. We are all God's servants, his apostles and ministers are in a special manner so, and as servants are bound to do all we can for his honour, our whole strength and our whole time are to be employed for him; for we are not our own, nor at our own disposal, but at our Master's.

2. As God's servants it becomes us to fill up our time with duty, and we have a variety of work appointed us to do, we ought to make the end of one service the beginning of another. The servant that has been ploughing or feeding cattle in the field, when he comes home at night has work to do still, he must wait at table, ver. 7, 8. When we have been employed in the duties of a religious conversation, that will not excuse us from the exercises of devotion, when we have been working for God, still we must be waiting on God, waiting on him continually.

3. Our principal care here must be to do the duty of our relation, and leave it to our Master to give us the comfort of it, when and how he thinks fit. No servant expects that his master should say to him, Go and sit down to meat, it is time enough to do that when we have done our day's work. Let us be in care to finish our work and to do that well; and then the reward will come in due time.

4. It is fit Christ should be first served before us: Make ready wherewith I may sup, and afterwards thou shalt eat and drink. Doubting Christians say, they cannot give to Christ the glory of his love as they should, because they have not yet obtained the comfort of it; but this is wrong; first let Christ have the glory of it, let us attend him with our praises, and then we shall eat and drink in the comfort of that love, and in that there is a feast.

5. Christ's servants, when they are to wait upon him, must gird themselves, must free themselves from every thing that is entangling and encumbering, and fit themselves with a close application of mind to go on and go through with their work; must gird up the loins of their mind. When we have prepared for Christ's entertainment, have made ready wherewith he may sup, we must then gird ourselves to attend him. This is expected from servants, and Christ may require it from us, but he doth not insist upon it: He was among his disciples, as one that served, and came not as other masters, to take state and to be ministered unto, but to minister, witness his washing his disciples feet.

6. Christ's servants do not so much as merit his thanks for any service they do him. Doth he thank that servant? Doth he reckon himself indebted to him for it? No, by no means. No good works of ours can merit any thing at the hand of God. We expect God's favour, not because we have by our services made him a debtor to us, but because he has by his promises made himself a debtor to his own honour, and that we may plead with him, but cannot sue for a quantum meruit.

7. Whatever we do for Christ, though it should be more perhaps than some others do, yet it is no more than is our duty to do. Though we should do all things that are commanded us, and alas! in many things we come short of that, yet there is no work of supererogation, it is but what we are bound to by that first and great commandment of loving God with all our heart, and soul which includes the utmost.

8. The best servants of Christ, even when they do the best services, must humbly acknowledge that they are unprofitable servants, though they are not those unprofitable servants that bury their talents, and shall be cast into utter darkness; yet as to Christ, and any advantage that can accrue to him by their services, they are unprofitable; our goodness extendeth not unto God, neither if we are righteous is he the better, Psal. xvi. 2. Job. xxii. 2. — xxxv. 7. God cannot be a gainer by our services, and therefore cannot be made a debtor, by them. He has no need of us, nor can our services make any addition to his perfections; it becomes us therefore to call ourselves unprofitable servants, but to call his service a profitable service, for God is happy without us, but we are undone without him.

11. ¶ And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. 12. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: 13. And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. 14. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. 15. And one of them, when

when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God. 16. And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. 17. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? 18. There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. 19. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

We have here an account of the cure of ten lepers, which we had not in any other of the evangelists. The leprosy was a disease which the Jews supposed to be inflicted for the punishment of some particular sin, and to be, more than other diseases, a mark of God's displeasure; and therefore Christ, who came to take away sin and turn away wrath, took particular care to cleanse the lepers that fell in his way. Christ was now in his way to Jerusalem, about the mid-way, where he had least acquaintance, in comparison with what he had either at Jerusalem or in Galilee; he was now in the frontier country, the marches that lay between Samaria and Galilee; he went that road to find out these lepers and to cure them, for he is found of them that sought him not. Observe,

First, The address of these lepers to Christ, they were ten in a gang; for though they were shut out from society with others, yet those that were infected were at liberty to converse with one another, which would be some comfort to them, as giving them an opportunity to compare notes, and to console with one another. Now observe,

1. They met Christ as he entered into a certain village: They did not stay till he had refreshed himself for some time after the fatigue of his journey, but met him as he entered the town, weary as he was, and yet he did not put them off, or adjourn their cause. They stood afar off, knowing that by the law their disease obliged them to keep their distance. Sense of our spiritual leprosy should make us very humble in all our approaches to Christ: Who are we that we should draw near to him that is infinitely pure, who are impure?

2. Their request was unanimous and very importunate, ver. 13. They lifted up their voices, being at a distance, and cried Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. Those that expect help from Christ, must take him for their Master and be at his command. If he be Master, he will be Jesus a Saviour, and not otherwise. They ask not in particular to be cured of their leprosy, but have mercy on us; and it is enough to refer ourselves to the compassions of Christ, for they fail not. They had heard the name of this Jesus, though he had not been much conversant in that country, and that was such as encouraged them to make application to him; and if but one of them began in so cheap and easy an address, they would all join.

3. Christ sent them to the priest, to be inspected by him, who was the judge of the leprosy. He did not tell them positively they should be cured, but bid them go shew themselves to the priests, ver. 14. This was a trial of their obedience, and it was fit it should be so tried, as Naaman's in a like case, Go wash in Jordan. Note, Those that expect Christ's favours, must take them in his way and method. Some of these lepers perhaps would be ready to quarrel with the prescription, let him either cure, or say he will not, and not send us to the priests on a fool's errand; but over-ruled by the rest, they all went to the priest. While the ceremonial law was yet in force Christ took care it should be observed, and the reputation of it kept up, and due honour paid to the priests in things pertaining to their function; but probably he had here a further design, which was to have the priest's judgment of and testimony to the perfectness of the cure; and that the priest might be awakened, and others by him to inquire after one that had such a commanding power over bodily diseases.

4. As they went, they were cleansed, and so became fit to be looked upon by the priest, and to have a certificate from him that they were clean. Observe, Then we may expect God to meet us with mercy, when we are found in the way of duty. If we do what we can, God will not be wanting to do that for us which we cannot. Go, attend upon instituted ordinances, go and pray, and read the scriptures: Go shew thyself to the priest: go and open thy case to a faithful minister, and though the means will not heal thee of thyself, God will heal thee in the diligent use of those means.

5. One of them, and but one, returned to give thanks, ver. 15. When he saw that he was healed, instead of going forward to the priest to be by him declared clean, and so discharged from his confinement, which was all that the rest aimed at, he turned back towards him that was the author of his cure, who he is desirous should have the glory of it, before he received the benefit of it. He appears to have been very hearty and affectionate in his thanksgivings, with a loud voice he glorified God, acknowledging it to come originally from him; and he lifted up his voice in his praises as he had done in his prayers, ver. 13. Those that have received mercy from God, should publish it to others, that they may praise God too, and may be encouraged by our experiences to trust in him. But he also made a particular address of thanks to Christ, ver. 16. He fell down at his feet, put himself into the most humble, reverent posture he could, and gave him thanks. Note, We ought to give thanks for the favours Christ bestows upon us, and particularly for recoveries from sickness: And we ought to be speedy in our returns of praise, and not to defer them, lest time wear out the sense of the mercy. And it becomes us to be very humble in our thanksgivings, as well as in our prayers. It becomes the seed of Jacob, like him, to own themselves less than the least of God's mercies, when they have received them, as well as when they are in pursuit of them.

6. Christ took notice of this one that had thus distinguished himself, for it seems he was a Samaritan; whereas the rest were Jews, ver. 16. The Samaritans were separatists from the Jewish church, and had not that pure knowledge and worship of God among them that the Jews had; and yet it was one of them that glorified God, when the Jews forgot, or when it was moved to them, refused to do it. Now observe here,

1. The particular notice Christ took of him, of the grateful return he made, and the ingratitude of those that were sharers with him in the mercy. That he who was a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, was the only one that returned to give glory to God, ver. 17, 18. See here, (1.) How rich Christ is in doing good; were there not ten cleansed? Here was a cure by whole sale, a whole hospital healed with one word's speaking. Note, There is an abundance of healing, cleansing virtue in the blood of Christ, sufficient for all his patients, though never so many. Here is ten at a time cleansed; we shall have never the less grace for others sharing. (2.) How poor we are in our returns: Where are the nine? Why did they not return to give thanks? This intimates that ingratitude is a very common sin: Of the many that receive mercy from God, there are but few, very few, that return to give thanks in a right manner, scarce one in ten, who render according to the benefit done unto them. (3.) How those often prove most grateful from whom it was least expected: A Samaritan gives thanks, and a Jew doth not. Thus many who profess revealed religion, are out-done and quite shamed by some that are governed only by natural religion, not

only in moral virtue, but in piety and devotion. This serves here to aggravate the ingratitude of those Jews of whom Christ speaks, as taking it very ill that his kindness was so slighted. And it intimates how justly he resents the ingratitude of the world of mankind, for whom he had done so much, and from whom he has received so little.

2. The great encouragement Christ gave him, ver. 19. The rest had their cure, and had it not revoked, as justly it might have been for their ingratitude, though they had such a good example of gratitude set before them: but he had his cure confirmed particularly with an encomium, Thy faith hath made thee whole. The rest were made whole by the power of Christ, in compassion to their distress, and in answer to their prayer; but he was made whole by his faith, which Christ saw him differenced by from the rest. Note, Temporal mercies are then doubled and sweetened to us, when they are fetched in by the prayers of faith, and returned by the praises of faith.

20. ¶ And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: 21. Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. 22. And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. 23. And they shall say to you, See here; or see there: go not after them, nor follow them. 24. For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. 25. But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation. 26. And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. 27. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. 28. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; 29. But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. 30. Even thus it shall be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. 31. In that day, he which shall be upon the house-top; and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. 32. Remember Lot's wife. 33. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. 34. I tell you, In that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. 35. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 36. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 37. And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? and he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

We have here a discourse of Christ's concerning the kingdom of God, i. e. the kingdom of the Messiah, which was now shortly to be set up, and of which there was great expectation.

1. Here is the demand of the Pharisees concerning it, which occasioned this discourse; they asked when the kingdom of God should come: forming a notion of it as a temporal kingdom, which should advance the Jewish nation above the nations of the earth; they were impatient to hear some tidings of its approach; they understood, perhaps, that Christ had taught his disciples to pray for the coming of it, and they had long preached that it was at hand: Now, says the Pharisees, when will that glorious view open? When shall we see this long looked-for kingdom?

2. Christ's reply to that demand, directed to the Pharisees first, and afterwards to his own disciples, who knew better how to understand it, ver. 22. what he said to both, he said to us.

1. That the kingdom of the Messiah was to be a spiritual kingdom, and not temporal and external. They asked when it would come: You know not what you ask, saith Christ, it may come, and you not be aware of it: For it has not an external shew, as other kingdoms have; the advancements and revolutions of which are taken notice of by the nations of the earth, and fill the newspapers; so they expected this kingdom of God would do: No, saith Christ, (1.) It will have a silent entrance, without pomp, without noise, it cometh not with observation, *ἡτὸς ἀπαρρησμένως*, with outward shew. They desired to have their curiosity satisfied concerning the time of it, to which Christ doth not give them any answer, but will have their mistakes rectified concerning the nature of it. It is not for you to know the times of this kingdom, those are secret things, which belong not to you; but the great intentions of this kingdom, those are things revealed: When Messiah the prince comes to set up his kingdom, they shall not say, Lo here, or lo there, as when a prince goes in progress to visit his territories, it is in every body's mouth, he is here, or he is there; for where the king is, there is the court: Christ will not come with all this talk; it will not be set up here or there; nor will it be here or there what country men are of, or where they dwell, as if that would place them nearer to or further from that kingdom. Those who confine Christianity and the church to this place, or that party, city, Lo here, or lo there, than which nothing is more contrary to the designs of catholic Christianity; so do they who make prosperity and external pomp a mark of the true church. (2.) It has a spiritual influence. The kingdom of God is within you. It is not of this world, John xviii. 36, its glories doth not strike men's fancies, but affect their spirits, and its power is over their souls and consciences, and from them it receives homage, and not from their bodies only. The kingdom of God will not change men's outward condition, but their hearts and lives; then it comes when it makes those humble and serious and heavenly, that were proud, vain, and carnal, when

when it seems those from the world that were wedded to the world; and therefore look for the kingdom of God in the revolutions of the heart, not of the civil government. The kingdom of God is among you, so some read it: You enquire when it will come, and are not aware that it is already begun to be set up in the midst of you. The gospel is preached, it is confirmed by miracles, it is embraced by multitudes, so that it is in your nation, though not in your hearts. Note, It is the folly of many curious inquirers concerning the times to come, that they look for that before them which is already among them.

2. That the setting up of this king was a work that would meet with a great deal of opposition and interruption, ver. 22. The disciples thought they should carry all before them, and expected a constant series of successes in their work; but Christ tells us it would be otherwise, *the days will come, before you have finished your testimony, and done your work, when you shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, one such a day as we now have, of the prosperity and progress of the gospel, and shall not see it.* At first indeed you will have wonderful success; so they had, when thousands were added to the church in a day, but do not think it will be always so; no, you will be persecuted and scattered, silenced and imprisoned; so that you will not have opportunities of preaching the gospel without fear, as you now have: people will grow cool to it when they have enjoyed it a while, so that you will not see such harvests of souls gathered in to Christ afterwards as at first, nor such multitudes flocking to him as doves to their windows. This looks forward to his disciples in after-ages; they must expect much disappointment; the gospel will not be always preached with like liberty and success: Ministers and churches will sometimes be under outward restraint. Teachers will be removed into corners, and solemn assemblies scattered; then they will wish to see such days of opportunities as they have formerly enjoyed, sabbath-days, sacrament-days, preaching-days, praying-days, those days of the Son of man, in which we hear from him and converse with him; the time may come when we may in vain wish for such days. God teaches us to know the worth of such mercies by the want of them: it concerns us while they are continued to improve them, and in the years of plenty to lay up in store for the years of famine. Sometimes they will be under inward restraint, will not have such tokens of the presence of the Son of man with them, as they have sometimes had; the Spirit is withdrawn from them, they see not their signs, the angel comes not down to stir the waters, there is a great stupidity among the children of men, and a great lukewarmness among the children of God; then we would wish to see such victorious triumphant days of the Son of man as we have sometimes seen, when he has ridden forth with his bow, and his crown conquering and to conquer, but we cannot see them. Note, We must not think that Christ's church and cause are lost because not always alike visible and prevailing.

3. That Christ and his kingdom are not to be looked for in this or that particular place, but his appearance will be general in all places at once, ver. 20, 24. *They will say to you, see here, or see there, here is one that will deliver the Jews out of the hands of the oppressing Romans, or there is one that will deliver the Christians out of the hands of the oppressing Jews, here is the Messiah, and there is his prophet: Here in this mountain, or there at Jerusalem, you will find the true church. Go not after them, or follow them, do not heed such suggestions, the kingdom of God was not designed to be the glory of one people only, but to give light to the Gentiles; for as the lightning that lightens out of one part under heaven, shines all on a sudden irresistibly to the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.* (1.) The judgments that are to destroy the Jewish nation, to lay them waste, and to deliver the Christians from them, shall fly like lightning through the land; shall lay all waste from one end of it to another; and those that are marked for this destruction, can no more avoid it or oppose it than they can a flash of lightning. (2.) The gospel that is to set up Christ's kingdom in the world, shall fly like lightning through the nations; the kingdom of the Messiah is not to be a local thing, but is to be dispersed far and wide over the face of the whole earth; it shall shine from Jerusalem to all parts about, and that in a moment; the kingdoms of the earth shall be leavened by the gospel, ere they were aware of it. The trophies of Christ's victories shall be erected on the ruins of the devil's kingdom, even in those countries that could never be subdued to the Roman yoke. The design of the setting up Christ's kingdom, was not to make one nation great, but to make all nations good; to bring at least all nations, and this point shall be gained, though the nations rage, and the kings of the earth set themselves with all their might against it.

4. That the Messiah must suffer before he must reign, ver. 25. *First must he suffer many things, many hard things, and be rejected of this generation; and if he be thus treated, his disciples must expect no other but to suffer and be rejected too for his sake.* They thought of having the kingdom of the Messiah set up in external splendor, no, faith Christ, we must go by the cross to the crown. The Son of man must suffer many things, pain and shame, and death, are those many things; he must be rejected by this generation of unbelieving Jews, before he be embraced by another generation of believing Gentiles; that his gospel might have the honour of triumphing over the greatest opposition, from those who ought to have given it the greatest assistance; and thus the excellency of the power would appear to be of God and not of man; for though Israel be not gathered, yet he will be glorious to the ends of the earth.

5. That the setting up the kingdom of the Messiah, would introduce the destruction of the Jewish nation, whom it would find in a deep sleep of security, and drowned in sensuality, as the old world was in the days of Noah, and Sodom in the days of Lot, ver. 26, &c. Observe,

1. How it had been with sinners formerly, and what posture the judgment of God; which they had been fairly warned of, did at length find them in. Look as far back as the old world, when all flesh had corrupted their way, and the earth was filled with violence; come a little lower, and think how it was with the men of Sodom, who were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly; now observe concerning both these, (1.) That they had fair warning given them of the ruin that was coming upon them for their sins; Noah was a preacher of righteousness to the old world, so was Lot to the Sodomites, they gave them timely notice what would be in the end of their wicked ways, and that it was not far off. (2.) That they did not regard the warning given them, and gave no credit, no heed to it; they were very secure, went on in their business as unconcerned as you would imagine, they did eat, they drank, indulged themselves in their pleasures, and took no care of any thing else, but to make provision for the flesh, counted upon the perpetuity of their present flourishing state, and therefore married wives, and were given in marriage, that their families might be built up; they were all very merry; so were the men of Sodom, and yet were busy too, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded. These were lawful things, but the fault was, they minded these inordinately, and their hearts were entirely set upon them, so that they had no heart at all to prepare against the threatened judgments; when they should have been as the men of Nineveh, fasting and praying, repenting and reforming, upon warning given them of an approaching judgment; they were going on securely, eating flesh and drinking wine when God calls to weeping and to mourning, Isa. xxiii. 12.

13. (3.) That they continued in their security and sensuality, till the threatened judgment came, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and Lot went out of Sodom, nothing said or done to them served to alarm or awaken them. Note, The stupidity of sinners in a sinful way, though it is as strange as it is without excuse, yet we are not to think it strange, for it is not without example. It is the old way that wicked men have trodden, that have gone lumbering to hell, as if their damnation lumbered while they did. (4.) That God took care for the preservation of those that were his, who believed and feared, and took the warning themselves which they gave to others. Noah entered into the ark, and there he was safe; Lot went out of Sodom and so went out of harm's way. If some run on heedless and headlong into destruction, that shall be no prejudice to the salvation of them that believe. (5.) That they were surprised with the ruin which they would not fear, and were swallowed up in it to their unspeakable horror and amazement. The flood came and destroyed all the sinners of the old world; fire and brimstone came and destroyed all the sinners of Sodom. God has many arrows in his quiver, and useth which he will in making war upon his rebellious subjects, for he can make which he will effectual. But that which is especially intended here, is to shew what a dreadful surprise destruction will be to those who are secure and sensual.

2. How it will be with sinners still, ver. 30. *Thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed, when Christ comes to destroy the Jewish nation by the Roman armies, the generality of that nation will be found under such a reigning security and stupidity as this.* They have warning given by Christ now, and will have it repeated to them by the apostles after him, as they had by Noah and Lot, but it will be all in vain. They will continue secure, will go on in their neglect and opposition of Christ and his gospel; till all the Christians are withdrawn from among them, and gone to the place of refuge. God will provide for them on the other side Jordan, and then a deluge of judgments shall flow in upon them, which will destroy all the unbelieving Jews. One would have thought this discourse of our Saviour's, which was public, and not long after published to the world, should have awakened them, but it did not, for the hearts of that people were hardened to their destruction. And in like manner, when Jesus Christ shall come to judge the world at the end of time, sinners will be found in the same secure and careless posture, altogether regardless of the judgment approaching, which will therefore come upon them as a snare; and in like manner the sinners of every age go on securely in their evil ways, and remember not their latter end nor the account they must give. Woe to them that are thus at ease in Zion.

6. That it ought to be the care of his disciples and followers, to distinguish themselves from the unbelieving Jews in that day, and leaving them, their city and country to themselves, to flee at the signal given, according to the direction that should be given, let them retire as Noah to his ark and Lot to his Zoar. You would have healed Jerusalem, as of old Babylon; but she is not healed, and therefore forsake her, flee out of the midst of her, and deliver every man his soul, Jer. li. 6-9.

(1.) This flight of theirs from Jerusalem must be expeditious, and must not be retarded by any concern about their worldly affairs, ver. 31. *He that shall be on the house-top when the alarm is given, let him not come down to take his stuff away; both because he cannot spare so much time, and because the carrying away of his effects will but incumber him and retard his flight. Let him not regard his stuff, at such a time when it will be next to a miracle of mercy if he have his life given him for a prey. Better leave his stuff behind him, than stay to look after it, and perish with them that believe not. It will be their concern to do as Lot and his family were charged to do, escape for thy life. Save yourselves from this untoward generation.*

(2.) When they have made their escape, they must not think of returning, ver. 32. *Remember Lot's wife; and take warning by her not only to flee from this Sodom, (for so Jerusalem is become, Isa. i. 10.) but to persevere in your flight, and do not look back as she did; - be not loth to leave a place marked for destruction, whoever or whatever you leave behind you, that is ever so dear to you. Those who have left the Sodom of a natural state, let them go forward and not so much as look a kind look towards it again. Let them not look back lest they should be tempted to go back; nay, lest that be construed a going back in heart, or an evidence that the heart was left behind. Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt, that she might remain a lasting monument of God's displeasure against apostates, that begin in the spirit, and end in the flesh.*

(3.) There would be no other way of saving their lives but by quitting the Jews, and if they thought to save themselves by a coalition with them, they would find themselves mistaken, ver. 31. *Whoever shall seek to save his life, by declining from his Christianity, and complying with the Jews, he shall lose it with them and perish in the common calamity; but whosoever is willing to venture his life with the Christians, upon the same bottom on which they venture, to take his lot with them in life and in death, he shall preserve his life, for he shall make sure of eternal life; and is in a likelier way at that time to save his life than those who embark in a Jewish bottom or insure upon their securities.* Note, Those do best for themselves, that trust in God in the way of duty.

7. That all good Christians should certainly escape, but many of them very narrowly, from that destruction, ver. 34, 35, 36. When God's judgments are laying all waste, he will take an effectual course to preserve those that are his, by remarkable providences distinguishing between them and others that were nearest to them; *two in a bed, the one taken and the other left; one snatched out of the burning and taken into a place of safety, while the other is left to perish in the common ruin.* Note, Though the sword devours one as well as the other, and all things seem to come alike to all; yet sooner or later it shall be made to appear that the Lord knows them that are his and are not; and how to take out the precious from the vile. We are sure the judge of all the earth will do right; and therefore when he sends a judgment on purpose to avenge the death of his Son upon those that crucified him, he will take care that none of those who glorified him, and gloried in his cross, shall be taken away by that judgment.

Lastly, That this distinguishing, dividing, discriminating work shall be done in all places, as far as the kingdom of God shall extend, ver. 37. *Where, Lord? They had enquired, concerning the time, and he would not gratify their curiosity with any information concerning that; they therefore tried him with another question, Where, Lord? Where shall those be safe that are taken? Where shall those parish that are left? The answer is proverbial, and may be explained so as to answer each side of the question, Wherever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together. (1.) Wherever the wicked are that are marked for perdition, they shall be found out by the judgment of God; as wherever a dead carcass is, the birds of prey will smell it out and make a prey of it. The Jews having made themselves a dead and putrid carcass, odious to God's holiness, and obnoxious to his justice, wherever any of that unbelieving generation is, the judgments of God shall fasten upon them as the eagles do upon the prey: Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies, Psalm xxi. 9, though they set their nets among the stars, Obad. 4. The Roman soldiers will hunt the Jews out of all their recesses and fastnesses, and none shall escape. (2.) Wherever the*

the godly are, that are marked for preservation, they shall be found happy in the enjoyment of Christ. As the dissolution of the Jewish church shall be extended to all parts, so shall the constitution of the Christian church: Wherever Christ is, believers will flock to him and meet in him, as eagles about the prey, without being directed or shewed the way, by the instinct of the new nature. Now Christ is where his gospel and his ordinances and church are, *For where two or three are gathered in his name, there is he in the midst of them*, and thither therefore others will be gathered to him. The kingdom of the Messiah is not to have one particular place for its metropolis, such as Jerusalem was to the Jewish church, to which all Jews were to resort: But *wherever the body is*, wherever the gospel is preached and ordinances are ministered, thither will pious souls resort, there they will find Christ, and by faith feast upon him. *Wherever Christ records his name, he will meet his people and bless them*, John iv. 21. 1 Tim. ii. 8. Many good interpreters understand it, of the gathering of the saints together to Christ in the kingdom of glory; ask not where the carcase will be, and how they shall find the way to it, for they shall be under an infallible conduct, to him who is their living quickening head, and the centre of their unity; to him shall the gathering of the people be.

C H A P. XVIII.

In this chapter we have, (1.) The parable of the importunate widow designed to teach us fervency in prayer, ver. 1—8. (2.) The parable of the Pharisee and publican, designed to teach us humility and humiliation for sin in prayer, ver. 9—14. (3.) Christ's favour to little children that were brought to him, ver. 15, 16, 17. (4.) The trial of a rich man that had a mind to follow Christ, whether he loved better Christ or his riches, his coming short upon that trial, and Christ's discourse with his disciples upon that occasion, ver. 18—30. (5.) Christ's foretelling of his own death and sufferings, ver. 31—34. (6.) His restoring sight to a blind man, ver. 35—43. And these four passages we had before in Matthew and Mark.

1. **A**ND he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; 2. Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: 3. And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. 4. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; 5. Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. 6. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. 7. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? 8. I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

This parable has its key hanging at the door; the drift and design of it is prefixed; Christ spoke with this intent, to teach us that *men ought always to pray, and not to faint*, ver. 1. (1.) It supposeth that all God's people are praying people, all God's children keep up both a constant and an occasional correspondence with him; send to him *steadily* and upon every emergency. It is our privilege and honour that we may pray, it is our duty, we ought to pray, we sin if we neglect it. It is to be our constant work, we ought always to pray, it is that which the duty of every day requires; we must pray and never grow weary of praying, nor think of leaving it off till it comes to be swallowed up in everlasting praise. But that which seems particularly designed here, is to teach us constancy and perseverance in our requests for some spiritual mercies that we in pursuit of, relating either to ourselves or the church of God; when we are praying for strength against our spiritual enemies, or lusts and corruptions, which are our worst enemies; we must continue instant in prayer, must pray and not faint, for we shall not seek God's face in vain; so we must likewise in our prayers for the deliverance of the people of God out of the hands of their persecutors and oppressors.

First, Christ shews by a parable, the power of importunity among men, who will be swayed by that when nothing else will influence, to do that which is just and right. He gives you an instance of an honest cause that was carried before an unjust judge, not by the equity or compassionableness of it, but purely by dint of importunity. Observe here,

1. The ill character of the judge that was in a certain city, he *neither feared God, nor regarded man*, i. e. he had no manner of concern either for his conscience or for his reputation; he stood in no awe, either of the wrath of God against him, or of the censures of men concerning him. Or he took no care to do his duty either to God, or man. He was a perfect stranger both to godliness and honour, and had no notion of either. Those that have cast off the fear of their Creator, it is not strange if they be altogether regardless of their fellow-creatures; where no fear of God is, no good is to be expected. Such a prevalence of irreligion and inhumanity is bad in any, but very bad in a judge that has power in his hand, in the use of which he ought to be guided by the principles of religion and justice, and if he be not, instead of doing good with his power he will be in danger of doing hurt. *Wickedness in the place of judgment*, was one of the worst evils Solomon saw under the sun, Eccles. iii. 16.

2. The distressed case of a poor widow that was necessitated to make her appeal to him, being wronged by some one that thought to bear her down with power and terror; she had manifestly right on her side; but it should seem, in soliciting to have right done her, she tied not herself to the formalities of the law, but made personal application to the judge from day to day at his own house, still crying, *Avenge me of mine adversary*; that is, *do me justice against mine adversary*; not that she desired to be revenged on him for any thing he had done against her, but that she might be obliged to restore what effects he had of hers in his hands, and might be disabled any more to oppress her. Note, Poor widows have often many adversaries, who barbarously take advantage of their weak and helpless state, to invade their rights and defraud them of what little they have; and magistrates are particularly charged, not only not to do violence to the widow, Jer. xxii. 3. but to judge the fatherless and plead for the widow, Isa. i. 17. to be their patrons and protectors; then they are *as gods*, for God is so, Psalm lxxviii. 5.

3. The difficulty and discouragement she met with in her cause; *He would not for a while*: according to his usual practice he frowned upon her,

took no notice of her cause, but connived at all the wrong her adversary did her; for she had no bribe to give him, no great man whom he stood in any awe of to speak for her, so that he did not at all incline to redress her grievances; and he himself was conscious of the reason of his dilatoriness, and could not but own within himself, that he *neither feared God, nor regarded man*; it is sad a man should know so much amiss by himself, and be in no care to amend it.

4. The gaining of her point by continual dunning of this unjust judge, ver. 5. *because this widow troubles me*, gives me continual toil, I will hear her cause and do her justice, not so much, lest by her clamour against me she bring me into an ill name, as lest by her clamour to me she weary me; for she is resolved she will give me no rest till it is done, and therefore I will do it to save myself further trouble; as good at first as at last. Thus she got justice done her by continual craving: she begged it at his door, followed him in the streets, solicited him in open court, and still her cry was, *Avenge me of mine adversary*, which he was forced to do, to get rid of her; for his conscience, as bad as he was, would not suffer him to send her to prison for an affront upon the court.

Secondly, He applies this for the encouragement of God's praying people to pray with faith and fervency, and to persevere therein.

1. He assures them that God will at length be gracious to them, ver. 7. *Hear what the unjust judge saith*; how he owns himself quite overcome by a constant importunity, and from thence infers, *Shall not God avenge his own elect?* Observe,

(1.) What is it that they desire and expect? that God would *avenge his own elect*. Note, 1. There is a people in the world that are God's people, his elect, his own elect, a choice people, a chosen people. And this he has an eye to in all he doth for them, it is because they are his chosen, and in pursuance of the choice he has made of them. 2. God's own elect meet with a great deal of trouble and opposition in this world, there are many adversaries that fight against them; Satan is their great adversary. 3. That which is wanted and waited for is God's preserving and protecting them, and the work of his own hands in them; his securing the interest of the church in the world, and of his grace in the heart.

(2.) What is it that is required of God's people in order to the obtaining of this; they must *cry night and day to him*, not that he needs their remonstrances, or can be moved by their pleadings, but this he has made their duty, and to this he has promised mercy. We ought to be particular in praying against our spiritual enemies, as St. Paul was, *For this thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me*, like this importunate widow. Lord, mortify this corruption; Lord, arm me against this temptation. We ought to concern ourselves for the persecuted and oppressed churches, and to pray that God would do them justice and set them in safety. And herein we must be very urgent, we must *cry* with earnestness; we must *cry day and night*, as those that believe prayer will be heard at last; we must *cry with God*, as those that know how to value the blessing, and will have no nay. God's praying people are bid to *give him no rest*, Isa. lxii. 6, 7.

(3.) What discouragements they may perhaps meet with in their prayers and expectations; he may *bear long with them*, and may not presently appear for them in answer to their prayers. He is *exercising his patience towards the adversaries of his people*, and doth not take vengeance on them; and he *exerciseth the patience of his people*, and doth not plead for them: He bore long with the cry of the sin of the Egyptians that oppressed Israel, and with the cry of the sorrows of those that were oppressed.

(4.) What assurance they have that mercy will come at last though it be delayed, and how it is supported by what the unjust judge saith, if this widow prevail by being importunate, much more shall God's elect prevail. For, (1.) This widow was a stranger, nothing related to the judge, but God's praying people are his own elect, whom he knows and loves and delights in, and has always concerned himself for. (2.) She was but one, but the praying people of God are many, that all come to him on the same errand, and agree to ask what they need, Matt. xviii. 19. As the saints of heaven surround the throne of glory with united praises, so saints on earth besiege the throne of grace with their united prayers. (3.) She came to a judge that bid her keep her distance, we come to a Father that bids us come boldly to him, and teaches us to cry *Abba, Father*. (4.) She came to an unjust judge, we come to a righteous Father, John xvii. 25. one that regards his own glory and the comforts of his poor creatures, especially those in distress, as widows and fatherless. (5.) She came to this judge purely upon her own account; but God is himself engaged in the cause which we are soliciting; and we can say, *Arise, O Lord, plead their own cause*; and what wilt thou do to thy great name? (6.) She had no friend to speak for her, to add force to her petition, and to use interest for her more than her own; but we have an advocate with the Father, his own Son, who ever lives to make intercession for us, and has a powerful prevailing interest in heaven; (7.) She had no promise of speeding, no, nor any encouragement given her to ask; but we have the golden scepter held out to us, are bid to ask, and it is promised it shall be given us. (8.) She could have access to the judge only at some certain times; but we may cry to God day and night, at all hours, and therefore may the rather hope to prevail by importunity. (9.) Her importunity was provoking to the judge, and she might fear lest it should set him more against her; but our importunity is pleasing to God: the prayer of the upright is his delight, and therefore we may hope shall avail much, if it be an effectual fervent prayer.

2. He intimates to them that notwithstanding this they will begin to be weary of waiting for him, ver. 8. *Nevertheless*, though such assurances are given that God will avenge his own elect, yet *when the Son of man comes, shall he find faith on the earth?* The Son of man will come to *avenge his own elect*, to plead the cause of persecuted Christians against the persecuting Jews, he will come in his providence to plead the cause of his injured people in every age, and at the great day he will come finally to determine the controversies of Zion. Now, when he comes, will he find faith in the earth? The question implies a strong negation, no, he shall not; he himself foresees it. (1.) This supposeth that it is on earth only that there is occasion for faith: For sinners in hell are feeling that which they would not believe, and saints in heaven are enjoying that which they did believe. (2.) It supposeth that faith is the great thing that Jesus Christ looks for. He looks down upon the children of men, and doth not ask, is there innocency? but is there faith? He inquired concerning the faith of those who applied themselves to him for cures. (3.) It supposeth that if there were faith, though never so little, he would discover it and find it out. The weakest believer and most obscure his eye is upon. (4.) It is foretold that when Christ comes to plead his people's cause he will find but little faith in comparison with what one might expect. That is,

1. In general, he will find but few good people, few that are really and truly good. Many that have the form and fashion of godliness, but few that have faith, that are sincere and honest: nay, he will find little fidelity among men, the faithful fail, Psalm xii. 1, 2. Even to the end of time there will still be occasion for the same complaint; the world will grow no better, no, not when it is drawing towards its period. Bad it is, and bad

bad it will be, and worst of all just before Christ's coming; the last times will be the most perilous.

2. In particular, he will find few that have *faith* concerning his coming. When he comes to *avenge his own elect*, he looks if there be any *faith to help and to uphold*, and wonders that there is none, *Isa. lix. 16.—lxiii. 5.* It intimates that Christ, both in his particular comings for the relief of his people and in his general coming at the end of time, may and will delay his coming so long as that, (1.) Wicked people will begin to *despise it*, and to say, *Where is the promise of his coming?* 2 Pet. iii. 4. They will challenge him to come, *Isa. v. 10. Amos v. 19.* and this delay will harden them in their wickedness, *Matt. xxiv. 48.* (2.) Even his own people will begin to *despair* of it, and to conclude he will never come, because he has passed their reckoning. God's time to appear for his people is, when things are brought to the last extremity, and when Sion begins to say, *The Lord has forsaken me.* See *Isa. xlix. 14—xl. 27.* But this is our comfort, that when the time appointed comes it will appear that the unbelief of man has not made the promise of God of none effect.

9. ¶ And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10. Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

The scope of this parable likewise is prefixed to it, and we are told, ver. 9. who they were that it was levelled at and for whom it was calculated: He designed it for the conviction of some who *trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.* They were such as had, (1.) A great conceit of themselves, and of their own goodness; they thought themselves as holy as they needed to be, and holier than all their neighbours, and such as might serve for examples to them all. But that was not all. (2.) They had a confidence in themselves before God; and not only had a high opinion of their own righteousness, but depended upon the merit of it, whenever they addressed to God, as their plea; they *trusted in themselves as being righteous*, they thought they had made God their debtor, and might demand anything from him: And, (3.) They despised others and looked upon them with contempt, as not worthy to be compared with them. Now Christ by this parable would shew such their folly, and that thereby they shut themselves out from acceptance with God. This is called a *parable*, though there be nothing of similitude in it; but is rather a description of the different temper and language of those that *proudly justify themselves*, and those that *humbly condemn themselves*; and their different standing before God. It is matter of fact every day.

First, Here are both these addressing themselves to the duty of prayer at the same place and time, ver. 10. *Two men went up into the temple* (for the temple stood upon a hill) *to pray.* It was not the hour of public prayer, but they went thither to offer up their personal devotions, as was usual with good people at that time when the temple was not only the place, but the medium of worship, and God had promised in answer to Solomon's request, that whatever prayer was made in a right manner, *in or towards that house*, it should *therefore* the rather be accepted. Christ is our temple, and to him we must have an eye in all our approaches to God. The Pharisee and the publican both went to the temple to pray. Note, Among the worshippers of God, in the visible church, there is a mixture of good and bad; of some that are accepted of God and some that are not; and so it has been ever since Cain and Abel brought their offspring to the same altar. The Pharisee, as proud as he was, could not think himself above prayer: Nor could the publican, as humble as he was, think himself shut out from the benefit of it; but we have reason to think these went with different views.

1. The Pharisee went to the temple to pray, because it was a public place, more public than the corners of the streets, and therefore he should have many eyes upon him who would applaud his devotion, which perhaps was more than was expected. The character Christ gave of the Pharisee, that *all their works they did to be seen of men*, gives us occasion for this suspicion. Note, Hypocrites keep up the external performance of religion only to *save or gain credit.* There are many we see every day at the temple, whom it is to be feared we shall not see in the great day at Christ's right hand.

2. The publican went to the temple because it was appointed to be a house of prayer, for all people, *Isa. lvi. 7.* The Pharisee came to the temple upon a compliment; the publican upon business; the Pharisee to make his appearance, the publican to make his request. Now God sees with what disposition and design we come to wait upon him in holy ordinances, and will judge of us accordingly.

Secondly, Here is the Pharisee's address to God, (for a prayer I cannot call it) he stood, and prayed thus with himself, ver. 11, 12. *standing by himself he prayed thus*, so some read it; he was wholly intent upon himself, had nothing in his eye but self, his own praise, and not God's glory; or standing in some conspicuous place where he distinguished himself; or setting himself in print with a great deal of state and formality, he prayed thus. Now that which he is here supposed to say is that which shews,

1. That he trusted to himself that he was righteous. A great many good things he saith of himself, which he will suppose to be true, that he was free from gross and scandalous sins: He was not an extortioner, nor an usurer, not oppressive to debtors or tenants, but fair and kind to all that had dependence upon him; he was not unjust in any of his dealings; did no man any wrong: he could say as Samuel, *whose ox or whose ass have I taken?* He was no adulterer, but had possessed his vessel in sanctification and honour. Yet this was not all, he fasted twice in the week, partly as an act of temperance, partly of devotion: the Pharisees and their disciples fasted twice a week, Monday and Thursday; thus he glorified God with his body; yet that was not all, he gave tithes of all that he possessed, according to the law, and so glorified God with his worldly estate: now all this was very well and commendable. Miserable is the condition of those who come short of the righteousness of this Pharisee, and yet he was not accepted; and why was he not? (1.) His giving God thanks for this, though in itself a good thing, yet seems to be a mere formality: He doth not say, *by the grace*

of God I am that I am, as Paul did, but turns it off with a slight *God I thank thee*, which is intended but for a plausible introduction to a proud vain-glorious ostentation of himself. (2.) He makes his boast of this, and dwells with delight upon this subject, as if all his business to the temple was to tell God almighty how very good he was; and he is ready to say with those hypocrites that we read of, *Isa. lviii. 3. Wherefore have we fasted say they, and thou seest not?* (2.) He trusted to it as a righteousness, and not only mentioned it, but pleaded it, as if hereby he had merited at the hand of God and made him his debtor. (4.) Here is not one word of prayer in all he saith: He went up to the temple to pray, but forgot his errand; was so full of himself and his own goodness that he thought he had need of nothing, no, not of the favour and grace of God, which it should seem he did not think worth asking.

2. That he despised others. (1.) He thought meanly of all mankind but himself; *I thank thee that I am not as other men are.* He speaks indefinitely, as if he were better than any. We may have reason to thank God that we are not as *some men* are, that are notoriously wicked and vile; but to speak at random thus, as if we only were good, and all besides us were reprobates, is to judge by wholesale. (2.) He thought meanly in a particular manner of this publican, whom he had left behind, it is probable, in the court of the Gentiles, and whose company he had fallen into as he came to the temple. He knew he was a publican, and therefore very uncharitably concluded that he was an extortioner, unjust, and all that is naught. Suppose it had been so and he had known it, what business had he to take notice of it? Could not he say his prayers (and that was all the Pharisees did) without reproaching his neighbours? Or was this a part of his God, *I thank thee?* And was he as much pleased with the publican's badness as with his own goodness? There could not be a plainer evidence not only of the want of humility and charity, but of reigning pride and malice than this was.

Thirdly, Here is the publican's address to God, which was the reverse of the Pharisee's, as full of humility and humiliation as his was of pride and ostentation; and of repentance for sin and desire towards God, as his was of confidence in himself, and his own righteousness and sufficiency.

1. He expressed his repentance and humility in what he did; and his gesture when he addressed himself to his devotions, was expressive of great seriousness and humility, and the proper clothing of a broken, penitent, and obedient heart. (1.) He stood afar off. The Pharisee stood, but crowded up as high as he could to the upper end of the court; the publican, in a sense of his unworthiness to draw near to God, kept at a distance, and perhaps for fear of offending the Pharisee, whom he observed to look scornfully upon him; and of disturbing his devotions. Hereby he owned, that God might justly behold him afar off, and send him into a state of eternal distance from him, and that it was a great favour that God was pleased to admit him thus nigh. (2.) He would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, much less his hands, as was usual in prayer. He did lift up his heart to God in the heavens, in holy desires, but through prevailing shame and humiliation he did not lift up his eyes in holy confidence and courage. His iniquities are gone over his head as a heavy burden, so that he is not able to look up, *Psal. xl. 12.* The dejection of his looks is an indication of the dejection of his mind at the thought of sin. (3.) He smote upon his breast, in a holy indignation at himself for sin: Thus would I smite this wicked heart of mine, the poisoned fountain out of which flow all the streams of sin, if I could come at it. The sinner's heart first strikes him in a penitent rebuke, 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. David's heart smote him, sinner what hast thou done? and then he smites his heart with penitent remorse, *O wretched man that I am!* Ephraim is said to smite upon his thigh, *Jer. xxxi. 19.* Great mourners are represented taberning upon their breasts, *Nob. ii. 7.*

2. He expressed it in what he said: His prayer was short; fear and shame hindered him from saying much; sighs and groans swallowed up his words; but what he said was to the purpose, *God, be merciful unto me a sinner!* And blessed be God that we have this prayer upon record, as an answered prayer, and that we are sure he that prayed it went to his house justified; and so shall we if we pray it as he did it, through Jesus Christ; *God be merciful to me a sinner*; the God of infinite mercy be merciful to me, for if he be not I am for ever undone, for ever miserable. God be merciful to me, for I have been cruel to myself: (1.) He owns himself a sinner by nature, by practice, guilty before God; *behold I am vile; what shall I answer thee?* The Pharisee denies himself to be a sinner; none of his neighbours can charge him, and he sees no reason to charge himself, with any thing amiss; *he is clean, he is pure from sin*; but the publican gives himself no other character but that of a sinner, a convicted criminal at God's bar. (2.) He has no dependence but upon the mercy of God, that, and that only, he relies upon. The Pharisee had insisted upon the merit of his fastings and tithes, but the poor publican disclaims all thought of merit, and flies to mercy as his city of refuge, and takes hold of the horns of that altar. Justice condemns me, nothing will save me but mercy, mercy. (3.) He earnestly prays for the benefit of that mercy, *O God, be merciful, be propitious to me; forgive my sins; be reconciled to me; take me into thy favour; receive me graciously; love me freely.* He comes as a beggar for an alms when he is ready to perish for hunger. Probably he repeated this prayer with renewed affections, and perhaps said more to the same purpose; made a particular confession of his sins, and mentioned the particular mercies he wanted and waited upon God for, but still this was the burden of the song. *God, be merciful to me a sinner.*

Fourthly, Here is the publican's acceptance with God: We have seen how differently these two addressed themselves to God, it is now worth while to enquire how they fared. There were those who would cry up the Pharisee, and by whom he would go to his house applauded, and who would look with contempt upon this sneaking whining publican: But our Lord Jesus, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secret is hid, who is perfectly acquainted with all proceedings in the court of heaven, assures us that this poor penitent broken-hearted publican went to his house justified, rather than the other. The Pharisee thought if one of them two must be justified and not the other, certainly it must be he rather than the publican: No, saith Christ, *I tell you*, I affirm it with the utmost assurance, and declare it to you with the utmost concern, *I tell you*, it is the publican rather than the Pharisee. The proud Pharisee goes away rejected of God; his thanksgiving are so far from being accepted that they are an abomination: He is not justified, his sins are not pardoned, nor is he delivered from condemnation: He is not accepted as righteous in God's sight, because he is righteous in his own sight; but the publican, upon this humble address to heaven, obtains the remission of his sins; and he whom the Pharisee would not set with the dogs of his flock, God sets with the children of his family.

And the reason given for this is, because God's glory is to resist the proud, and give grace to the humble. (1.) Proud men that exalt themselves are rivals with God, and therefore they shall certainly be abased. God, in his discourse with Job, appeals to this proof that he is God, that he looks upon every one that is proud, and brings him low, *Job xl. 12.* (2.) Humble men that abase themselves, are subject to God, and they shall be exalted: God has preferment in store for those that will take it as a favour, not for those that demand

demanded it as a debt. He shall be exalted into the love of God, and communion with him; shall be exalted into a satisfaction in himself, and exalted at last as high as heaven. See how the punishment answers the sin, *He that exalteth himself shall be abased*; see how the recompence answers the duty, *He that humbles himself shall be exalted*. See also the power of God's grace in bringing good out of evil; the publican had been a great sinner, and out of the greatness of his sin was brought the greatness of his repentance; *out of the eater came forth meat*; and, on the contrary, the power of Satan's malice in bringing evil out of good. It was good that the Pharisee was no extortioner or unjust; but the devil made him proud of this to his ruin.

15. ¶ And they brought unto him also infants, that he should touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. 15. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. 17. Verily I say unto you Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein.

This passage of story we had both in Matthew and Mark, it very fitly follows here after the story of the publican, as a confirmation of the truth which was to be illustrated by that parable, that those shall be accepted with God and honoured, who humble themselves, and for them Christ has blessings in store, the choicest and best of blessings. Observe here,

1. That those who are themselves blessed in Christ should desire to have their children also blessed in him, and should hereby testify the true honour they have for Christ, by their making use of him, and the true love they have for their children by their concern about their souls. They brought to him infants very young, not able to go, sucking children, as some think. None too little, too young to bring to Christ, who knows how to shew kindness to them that are not capable of doing service to him.

2. One gracious touch of Christ's will make our children happy: They brought infants to him, that he might touch them in token of the application of his grace and Spirit to them, for that always makes way for his blessings, which likewise they expected, see *Isa. xlv. 3. I will first pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.*

3. It is no strange thing for those that make their application to Jesus Christ for themselves or for their children, to meet with discouragement, even from those that should countenance and encourage them. When the disciples saw it, they thought if this were admitted, it would bring an endless trouble upon their Master, and therefore they rebuked them, and frowned upon them. The spouse complained of the watchmen, *Cant. iii. 3—v. 7.*

4. Many whom the disciples rebuke, the Master invites. Jesus called them unto him, when upon the disciples' check they were retiring. They did not appeal from the disciples to the Master, but the Master took cognizance of their despised cause.

5. It is the mind of Christ, that little children should be brought to him, and presented as living sacrifices to his honour. Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; let nothing be done to hinder them, for they shall be as welcome as any. The promise is to us, and to our seed, and therefore he that has the dispensing of promised blessings, will bid them welcome to him with us.

6. The children of those that belong to the kingdom of God, do likewise belong to that kingdom, as the children of freemen are freemen. If the parents be members of the visible church, the children are so too; for if the root be holy the branches are so.

7. So welcome are children to Christ, that those grown people are most welcome to him that have in them most of the disposition of children, ver. 17. *Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child*, that is, receive the benefits of it with humility and thankfulness, not pretending to merit them, as the Pharisee did, but gladly owning himself indebted to free grace for them, as the publican did, unless a man be brought to this self-denying frame, he shall in no wise enter into that kingdom. They must receive the kingdom of God as children receive their estates by descent and inheritance, not by purchase, and call it their Father's gift.

18. ¶ And a certain ruler asked him saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? 19. And Jesus said unto him, why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is God. 20. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother. 21. And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up. 22. Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. 23. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. 24. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 25. For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 26. And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved? 27. And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. 28. Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee. 29. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, 30. Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

In these verses we have,

First, Christ's discourse with a ruler that had a good mind to be directed by him in the way to heaven. In which we may observe,

1. It is a blessed sight to see persons of distinction in the world distinguish themselves from others of their rank, by their concern about their souls and another life. Luke takes notice of it, that he was a ruler; few of the rulers

had any esteem for Christ, but here was one that had, whether a church or state-ruler doth not appear; but he was one in authority.

2. The great thing we are every one of us concerned to enquire after is, what we should do to get to heaven; *What we shall do to inherit eternal life?* which implies such a belief of an eternal life after this, as atheists and infidels have not; such a concern to make it sure, as careles unthinking world have not, and such a willingness to comply with any terms that it might be made sure, as those have not that are resolutely devoted to the world and the flesh.

3. Those that would inherit eternal life must apply themselves to Jesus Christ as their Master, their teaching master, so it signifies here (*διδασκαλῆς*) and their ruling master here, and so they shall for certain find him. There is no learning the way to heaven but in the school of Christ, by those that enter themselves into it and stick to it.

4. Those that come to Christ as their master must believe him to have not only a divine mission, but a divine goodness. Christ would have this ruler know, that if he understand himself aright in calling him good, he did in effect call him God, and indeed he was so, ver. 19. *Why callest thou me good? thou knowest there is none good but one, that is God, and dost thou then take me for God? if so, thou art in the right.*

5. Our Master, Christ himself, has not altered the way to heaven from what it was before his coming, but only has made it more plain and easy and comfortable, and provided for our relief, in case we take any false step. *Thou knowest the commandments*; Christ came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to establish them. Wouldest thou inherit eternal life? govern thyself by the commandments.

6. The duties of the second table must be conscientiously observed, in order to our happiness, and we must not think that any acts of devotion, how plausible soever, will atone for the neglect of them. Nor is it enough to keep ourselves free from the gross violations of these commandments, but we must know these commandments, as Christ has explained them in his sermon upon the mount, in their extent and spiritual nature, and so observe them.

7. Men think themselves innocent, because they are ignorant, so this ruler did: He said, *All these have I kept from my youth up*, ver. 21. He knows no more evil by himself than the Pharisee did, ver. 11. He boasts that he began early in a course of virtue; that he had continued in it to this day, and that he had not in any instance transgressed. Had he been acquainted with the extent and spiritual nature of the divine law, and with the workings of his own heart, had he been but Christ's disciple a while and learned of him, he would have said quite the contrary; *All these have I broken from my youth up*, in thought, word, and deed.

8. The great things by which we are to try our spiritual state are, how we stand affected to Christ and to our brethren, to this world and to the other; by these this man was tried: For, (1.) If he have a true affection to Christ, he will come and follow him, will attend to his doctrine, and submit to his discipline, whatever it cost him. None shall inherit eternal life, who are not willing to take their lot with the Lord Jesus, to follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes. (2.) If he have a true affection to his brethren, he will, as there is occasion distribute to the poor, who are God's receivers of his dues out of our estates. (3.) If he think meanly of this world, as he ought, he will not stick at selling what he has, if there be a necessity for it, for the relief of God's poor. (4.) If he thinks highly of the other world, as he ought, he will desire no more but to have treasure in heaven, and will reckon that a sufficient abundant recompence for all that he has left or lost, or laid out for God in this world.

9. There are many that have a great deal in them that is very commendable, and yet they perish for lack of some one thing, so this ruler here, he broke with Christ upon this, he liked all his terms very well, but this which would part between him and his estate: In this, I pray thee, have me excused. If this be the bargain, it is no bargain.

10. Many that are loth to leave Christ, yet do leave him. After a long struggle between their convictions and their corruptions, their corruptions carry the day at last; they are very sorry they cannot serve God and mammon both, but if one must be quitted, it shall be their God, not their worldly gain.

Secondly, Christ's discourse with his disciples upon this occasion: In which we may observe,

1. That riches is a great hindrance to many in the way to heaven. Christ took notice of the reluctancy and regret with which the rich man broke off from him, he saw that he was very sorrowful, and was sorry for him; but from thence he infers, *How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!* ver. 24. If this ruler had had as little of the world as Peter, and James, and John had, in all probability he would have left it to follow Christ as they did; but having a great estate, it had a great influence upon him, and he chose rather to take his leave of Christ, than to lay himself under an obligation to dispose of his estate in charitable uses. Christ asserts the difficulty of the salvation of rich people very emphatically, ver. 25. *It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.* It is a proverbial expression, that speaks the thing extremely difficult.

2. That such a general affection there is in the hearts of all people to this world and the things of it, that since Christ has required it as necessary to salvation, that we should sit loose to this world, it is really very hard for any to get to heaven: If we must sell all, or break with Christ, who then can be saved? ver. 26. They do not find fault with what Christ required, as hard and unreasonable: No, it is very fit that they who expect an eternal happiness in the other world, should be willing to forego all that is dear to them in this world in expectation of it. But they know how closely the hearts of the most of men cleave to this world, and are ready to despair of their being brought to this.

3. That there are such difficulties in the way of our salvation as could never be got over but by pure omnipotence, by that grace of God which is almighty, and to which that is possible which exceeds all created power and wisdom. The things which are impossible with men, and utterly impossible it is that men should work such a change upon their own spirits as to turn them from the world to God, it is like dividing the sea, and driving Jordan back, these things are possible with God: His grace can work upon the soul, so as to alter the bent and bias of it, and give it a contrary ply; and it is he that works in us both to will and to do.

4. That there is an aptness in us to speak too much of what we have left and lost, of what we have done and suffered for Christ. This appears in Peter, ver. 28. *Lo, we have left all and followed thee*; when it came in his way, he could not forbear magnifying his own and his brethren's affection to Christ, in quitting all to follow him. But this we should be so far from boasting of, that we should rather acknowledge it not worth taking notice of, and be ashamed of ourselves that there has been any regret and difficulty in the doing of it, and any hankering towards those things afterwards.

5. That whatever we have left or laid out for Christ, it shall without fail be abundantly made up to us in this world and that to come, notwithstanding our weaknesses and infirmities, ver. 29. 30. *There is no man that has left the comfort of his estate or relations for the kingdom of God's sake,* rather

rather than they should hinder either his services to that kingdom or his enjoyments of it, *who shall not receive manifold more in this present time*, in the graces and comfort of God's Spirit, in the pleasures of communion with God and of a good conscience, advantages, which to those that know how to value and improve them, will abundantly countervail all their losses. Yet this is not all, in the world to come they *shall receive life everlasting*.

31. ¶ Then he took *unto him* the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. 32. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: 33. And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. 34. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

Here is, 1. The notice Christ gave to his disciples of his sufferings and death approaching, and of the glorious issue of them, which he himself had a perfect sight and fore-knowledge of, and thought it necessary to give them warning of, that it might be the less surprise and terror to them.

Two things here are, which we had not in the other evangelists, (1.) That the sufferings of Christ are here spoken of as the fulfilling of the scriptures, with which consideration Christ reconciled himself to them, and would reconcile them. *All things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man*, especially the hardships he should undergo, *shall be accomplished*. Note, The Spirit of Christ in the Old Testament Prophets, testified beforehand his sufferings, and the glory that shall follow, 1 Pet. i. 11. This proves that the scriptures are the word of God, for they had their exact and full accomplishment; and that Jesus Christ was sent of God, for they had their accomplishments in him; this was he that should come, for whatever was foretold concerning the Messiah was verified in him; and he would submit to any thing for the fulfilling of scripture, that not one jot or tittle of that should fall to the ground. This makes the offence of the cross to cease, and puts an honour upon it. *Thus it was written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer*, thus it became him. (2.) That the ignominy and disgrace done to Christ in his sufferings, is here most insisted upon. The other evangelists had said, he should be mocked, but here it is added, *He should be spitefully treated*, *scourged*, he shall be loaded with contumely and contempt, shall have all possible reproach put upon him. This was that part of his sufferings, by which in a spiritual manner he satisfied God's justice for the injury we had done him in his honour by sin. Here is one particular instance of disgrace done him, that *he was spit upon*, which had been particularly foretold, *Isa. 50. 6*. But here, as always, when Christ spoke of his sufferings and death, he foretold his resurrection, as that which took off both the terror and reproach of his sufferings; *the third day he shall rise again*.

2. The confusion that the disciples were hereby put into; this was so contrary to the notions they had had of the Messiah and his kingdom, such a back to their expectations from their Master, and such a breaking of all their measures, that *they understood none of these things*, ver. 34. Their prejudices were so strong that they would not understand them literally, and they could not understand them otherwise, so that they did not understand them at all; it was a mystery, it was a riddle to them, it must be so; but they think it impossible to be reconciled with the glory and honour of the Messiah, and the design of setting up his kingdom. This saying was hid from them, *ἀποκρυφένον αὐτοῖς*, it was Apocrypha to them, they could not receive it: for their parts they had read the Old Testament many a time, but they could never see any thing in it that should be accomplished in the disgrace and death of this Messiah. They were so intent upon the prophecies that spoke of his glory, that they overlooked those who spoke of his sufferings, which the Scribes and doctors of the law should have directed them to take notice of, and should have brought into their creeds and catechisms as well as the other: but they did not suit their scheme, and therefore was laid aside. Note, Therefore it is that people run into mistakes, because they read their Bibles by the halves, and are as partial in the prophets as they are in the law. They are only for the smooth things, *Isa. xxx. 10*. Thus now we are too apt in reading the prophecies, that are yet to be fulfilled, to have our expectations raised of the glorious state of the church in the latter days: But we overlook its wilderness, sackcloth state, and are willing to fancy that is over, and nothing is reserved for us but the balcony days; and then, when tribulation and persecution arise, we do not understand it, neither know we the things that are done; though we are told as plainly as can be, that *through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God*.

35. ¶ And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the wayside begging: 36. And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. 37. And they told him, That Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. 38. And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. 39. And they that went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, *Thou Son of David, have mercy on me*. 40. And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him, 41. Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. 42. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee. 43. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.

Christ came not only to bring light to a dark world, and to set before us the objects we are to have in view, but also to give sight to blind souls, and by healing the organ to enable them to view those objects: As a token of this he cured many of their bodily blindness; we have now an account of one to whom he gave sight, near Jericho. Mark gives us an account of one, and names him, whom he cured, *as he went out of Jericho*, Mark x. 46. Matthew speaks of two, whom he cured *as they departed from Jericho*, Matt. xx. 30. Luke saith it was, *ἑνὶ τῶν γυναικῶν αὐτοῦ*, when he was near to Jericho

which might be when he was going out of it; as well as when he was coming into it. Observe,

1. This poor blind man sat by the wayside begging, ver. 35. It seems he was not only blind but poor, had nothing to subsist on, nor any relations to maintain him; the fitter emblem of the world of mankind which Christ came to heal and save, they are therefore wretched and miserable; for they are both poor and blind, Rev. iii. 17. He sat begging, for he was blind and could not work for his living. Note, Those ought to be relieved by charity whom the providence of God has any way disabled to get their own bread. Such objects of charity by the wayside ought not to be overlooked by us; Christ here cast a favourable eye upon a common beggar, and though there are cheats among such, yet they must not therefore be all thought so.

2. Hearing the noise of a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant, ver. 36. This we had not before: It teacheth us that it is good to be inquisitive, and those that are so some time or other find the benefit of it. Those that want their sight should make so much the better use of their hearing; and when they cannot see with their own eyes should, by asking questions, make use of other people's eyes. So this blind man did, and by that means came to understand that Jesus of Nazareth passed by, ver. 37. It is good being in Christ's way; and when we have an opportunity of applying ourselves to him not to let it slip.

3. His prayer has in it a great deal both of faith and fervency. *Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me*, ver. 38. He owns Christ to be the Son of David, the Messiah promised, he believes him to be a Jesus, a Saviour, he believes he is able to help and succour him, and earnestly begs his favour; *have mercy on me*, pardon my sin, pity my misery. Christ is a merciful king; those that apply themselves to him as the Son of David shall find him so, and ask enough for themselves when they pray; *have mercy on us*; for Christ's mercy includes all.

4. Those that are in good earnest for Christ's favours and blessings, will not be put by from the pursuit of them, though they meet with opposition and rebuke. They that went along chid him as troublesome to the Master, noisy and impertinent, and bid him hold his peace, but he went on with his petition, nay, the check given him was but as a dam to a full stream, which makes it swell so much the more; he cried the louder, *Thou Son of David, have mercy on me*. Those that would speed in prayer must be importunate in prayer. This history, in the close of the chapter, speaks the same thing with the parable in the beginning of the chapter, that *men ought always to pray, and not to faint*.

5. Christ encouraged poor beggars, whom men frown upon, and invites them to come to him, and is ready to entertain them, and bid them welcome. He commanded him to be brought to him. Note, Christ has more tenderness and compassion for distressed supplicants than any of his followers have. Though Christ was upon his journey yet he stopped and *said*, and commanded him to be brought to him. Those that had checked him must now lend him their hands to lead him to Christ.

6. The prayer of faith, guided by Christ's encouraging promises and grounded on them, shall not be in vain; nay, it shall not only receive an answer of peace, but of honour, ver. 42. Christ said, *Receive thy sight, thy faith has made thee whole*. True faith will produce fervency in prayer, and both together will fetch in abundance of the fruits of Christ's favour; and they are then doubly comfortable when they come in that way, when we are saved by faith.

7. The grace of Christ ought to be thankfully acknowledged to the glory of God, ver. 43. (1.) The poor beggar himself, that had his sight restored, followed Christ, glorifying God. Christ made it his business to glorify his Father; and those whom he healed then pleased him best when they praised God, as those shall please God best that praise Christ, and do honour, for in confessing that he is Lord, we give glory to God the Father. It is for the glory of God if we follow Christ, as those will do whose eyes are opened. (2.) The people that saw it could not forbear giving praise to God, who had given such power to the Son of man, and by him had conferred such favours on the sons of men. Note, We must give praise to God for his mercies to others as well as for mercies to ourselves.

CHAP XIX.

In this chapter we have, (1.) The conversion of Zaccheus the publican at Jericho, ver. 1—10. (2.) The parable of the pounds which the king intrusted with his servants, and of his rebellious citizens, ver. 11—27. (3.) Christ's riding in triumph (such triumph as it was) into Jerusalem: and his lamentation in prospect of the ruin of that city, ver. 28—44. (4.) His teaching in the temple, and casting the buyers and sellers out of it, ver. 45—48.

1. **A**ND Jesus entered and passed through Jericho, 2. And, behold, there was a man named Zaccheus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. 3. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. 4. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. 5. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house. 6. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. 7. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. 8. And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold. 9. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. 10. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Many no doubt were converted to the faith of Christ, of whom no account is kept in the gospels, but the conversion of some, whose case had something

something in it extraordinary, is recorded, as this of Zaccheus: Christ passed through Jericho, ver. 1. That city was built under a curse, yet Christ honoured it with his presence, for the gospel *takes away the curse*. Though it ought not to have been built, yet it was not therefore a sin to live in it when it was built. Christ was now going from the other side Jordan to Bethany, near Jerusalem, to raise Lazarus to life; when he was going to do one good work he contrived to do many by the way. He did good both to the *souls* and to the *bodies* of people; we have here an instance of the former. Observe,

First, Who, and what this Zaccheus was.

His name speaks him a Jew; Zaccai was a common name among the Jews; they had a famous rabbin much about this time of that name. Observe,

1. His calling and the post he was in; *he was the chief among the publicans*, receiver-general, other publicans were officers under him; he was, as some think, farmer of the customs. We often read of publicans coming to Christ. But here was one that was *chief* of the publicans, was in authority, that inquired after him. God has his remnant among all sorts; Christ came to save even the *chief of sinners*, and therefore even the *chief of publicans*.

2. His circumstances in the world were very considerable. *He was rich*. The inferior publicans were commonly men of broken fortunes and low in the world; but he that was *chief of the publicans* had raised a good estate. Christ had lately shewed how *hard it is for rich people to enter into the kingdom of God*, yet presently produceth an instance of one rich man that had been lost and was found, and that not as the prodigal, by being reduced to want.

Secondly, How he came in Christ's way, and what was the occasion of his acquaintance with him.

1. He had a great *curiosity to see Jesus*, what kind of a man he was, having heard great talk of him, ver. 3. It is natural to us to come in sight of those whose fame has filled our ears, as being apt to imagine there is something extraordinary in their countenances; at least he would be able to say hereafter, he had seen such and such *great men*. But the eye is *not satisfied with seeing*. We should now *seek to see Jesus*, with an eye of faith; to see *who he is*, should address ourselves in holy ordinances with this in our eyes, *We would see Jesus*.

2. He could not get his curiosity gratified in this matter, because he was *little* and the crowd was *great*. Christ did not study to *show himself*, was not carried on men's shoulders as the popes in procession, that all men might see him, neither he nor his kingdom *came with observation*; he did not ride in an open chariot as princes do, but as *one of us*, he was *lost in a crowd*; for that was the day of his humiliation. Zaccheus was *low of stature*, and over-topped by all about him, so that he could not get a sight of Jesus. Many that are little of stature have large souls and are lively in spirits. Who would not rather be a Zaccheus than a Saul, though he was *higher by head and shoulders* than all about him? Let not those that are little of stature *take thought of adding cubits to it*.

3. Because we would not baulk his fancy, he *forgot his gravity* as chief of the publicans, and *ran before* like a boy, and *climbed up into a sycamore-tree to see him*. Note, Those that sincerely desire a sight of Christ will use the proper means for gaining a sight of him, and will break through a deal of difficulty and opposition, and be willing to take pains to see him. Those that find themselves *little* must take all the advantages they can get to *raise themselves* to a sight of Christ, and not be ashamed to own that they need them, and all little enough. Let not dwarfs despair, with good help, by aiming high to reach high.

Thirdly, The notice Christ took of him, and the call he gave him to a farther acquaintance, ver. 5. and the efficacy of that call, ver. 6.

1. Christ *invited himself* to Zaccheus's house, not doubting of his hearty welcome there; nay, wherever Christ comes, as he brings his own *entertainment* along with him, so he brings his own *welcome*, he opens the heart and inclines it to receive him. Christ *looked up into the tree and saw Zaccheus*. He came to look upon Christ, and resolved to take particular notice of him, but little thought of being taken notice of by Christ. That was an honour too great and too far above his merit for him to have any thought of. See how Christ *prevented* him with the blessings of his goodness, and *outdid* his expectations; and see how he *encouraged* very weak beginnings and helped them forward. He that had a mind to know Christ shall be *known of him*; that only courted to see him, shall be admitted to converse with him. Note, Those that are faithful in a little, shall be entrusted with more. And sometimes those that come to hear the word of Christ, as Zaccheus did, only for curiosity, beyond what they thought of, have their consciences awakened, and their hearts changed. Christ called him *by name*, Zaccheus, for he knows his chosen *by name*, *are they not in his book?* He might ask, as Nathaniel did, John i. 48. *Whence knowest thou me?* But before he climbed the sycamore-tree Christ saw him and knew him. He bid him *make haste and come down*. Those that Christ calls must *come down*, must humble themselves, and not think to climb to heaven by any righteousness of their own: And they must *make haste* and come down, for delays are dangerous. Zaccheus must not hesitate but hasten; he knows it is not a matter that needs consideration whether he should welcome such a guest to his house. He must *come down*, for Christ intends this day to *bait at his house*, and stay an hour or two with him. *Behold, he stands at the door and knocks*.

2. Zaccheus was *overjoyed* to have such an honour put upon his house, ver. 6. He *made haste*, and came down and received him *joyfully*. Among his receiving him into his house was an indication and token of his receiving him into his heart. Note, When Christ calls to us we must *make haste* to answer his calls; and when he comes to us we must *receive him joyfully*; *lift up your hearts, O ye gates*. We may well *receive him joyfully* who brings all good along with him, and, when he takes possession of the soul, opens springs of joy there which will flow to eternity. How often has Christ said to us, *Open to me*, when we have with the spouse made excuses, Cant. v. 2, 3. Zaccheus's forwardness to receive Christ will shame us. We have not now Christ to entertain in our houses, but we have his disciples, and what is done to them he takes as done to himself.

Fourthly, The offence which the people took at this *kind greeting*, between Christ and Zaccheus. Those narrow-souled censorious Jews *murmured*, saying, that he was *gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner*, *συνεσθαι μετὰ αμαρτωλῶν*, with a sinful man; and were not they themselves sinful men? Was it not Christ's errand into the world to seek and save *men that are sinners*? But Zaccheus they think to be a sinner above all men that dwelt in Jericho; such a sinner as was not fit to be conversed with.

Now this was very unjust to blame Christ for going to *his house*: For, (1.) Though he was a publican, and many of the publicans were *ill men*, it did not therefore follow that they were *all so*; we must take heed of condemning men in the lump or by common fame, for at God's bar every man will be judged as he is. (2.) Though he *had been a sinner*, it did not therefore follow that he was now as bad as he had been; though they knew his past life to be bad, Christ might know his present frame to be good. God allows room for repentance, and so must we. (3.) Though

he was now a sinner, they ought not to blame Christ for going to him, because he was in *no danger* of getting hurt by a sinner; but in *great hopes* of doing good to a sinner; whither should the physician go but to the sick? Yet see how that which is *well done* may be *ill construed*.

Fifthly, The proofs which Zaccheus gave publicly, that though he had been a *sinner* he was now a *penitent*, and a *true convert*, ver. 8. He doth not expect to be justified by his works, as the Pharisee who boasted of what he had done, but by his *good works* he will, through the grace of God, evidence the *sincerity* of his faith and *repentance*; and here declare what his determination was. He makes this declaration *standing*, that he might be seen and heard by those who murmured at Christ for coming to his house; *with the mouth confession is made* of repentance as well as faith. He *stood*, which denotes his saying it deliberately and with solemnity in the nature of a vow to God. He addressed himself to Christ in it, not to the people, they were not to be his judges, but to the Lord, and he stands as it were at his bar. What we do that is good we must do *as unto him*; we must appeal to him and approve ourselves to him in our integrity, in all our good purposes and resolutions. He makes it appear that there is a change in *his heart*, (and that is repentance) for there is a challenge in his way.

His resolutions are of second-table duties; for Christ, upon all occasions, laid great stress upon them; and they are such as are suited to his condition and character; for in them will best appear the truth of our repentance.

1. Zaccheus had a good estate, and whereas he had been in it hitherto laying up treasures for himself, and doing hurt to himself; now he resolves that for the future he will be all towards God, and do good to others with it, *Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor*. Not I will give it by my will when I die, but I do give it now. Probably he had heard of the command of trial Christ gave to another rich man to sell what he had and give to the poor, Matt. xix. 21. and how he broke with Christ upon it: But so will not I, saith Zaccheus. I agree to it at the first word; though hitherto I have been uncharitable to the poor, now I will relieve them, and give so much the more for having neglected the duty so long. Even the half of my goods, which is a very large proportion, to be set apart for works of piety and charity. The Jews used to say that a fifth part of a man's income yearly was very fair to be given to pious uses, and about that share the law directed; Zaccheus would go much further, and give the one moiety to the poor; which would oblige him to retrench all his extravagant expences, as his retrenching those would enable him to relieve many with his superfluities. If we were but more temperate and self-denying, we should be more charitable; and were we content with less ourselves we should have the more to give to them that need. This he mentions here as a fruit of his re-entrance. Note, It well becomes converts to God to be charitable to the poor.

2. Zaccheus was conscious to himself that he had not gotten all he had honestly and fairly, but some by indirect and unlawful means, and of what he had gotten by such means he promised to make restitution; *If I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, or if I have wronged any man in the way of my business as a publican, exacting more than was appointed, I do promise to restore him four fold*, the restitution that a thief was to make, Exod. xxii. 1. (1.) He seems plainly to own that he had *done wrong*; his office, as a publican, gave him opportunity to do wrong, of im posing upon the merchants to curry favour with the government. True penitents will own themselves not only in general guilty before God, but will particularly reflect upon that which has been their own iniquity, and which by reason of their business and employment in the world has most easily beset them. (2.) That he done wrong *by false accusation*, this was the temptation of the publicans, which John Baptist had warned them of particularly, Luke iii. 14. They had the ear of the government, and every thing would be stretched in favour of the revenue, which gave them an opportunity of gratifying their revenge if they bore a man an ill will. (3.) He promised to restore *four fold* as far as he could recollect or find by his books that he had *wronged any man*. He doth not say, if I be sued and compelled to it I will make restitution; some are *honest* when they cannot help it; but he will do it *voluntarily*, it shall be *my own act and deed*. Note, Those who are convinced of having done wrong cannot evidence the sincerity of their repentance but by *making restitution*. Observe, He doth not think his giving half his estate to the poor will atone for the wrong he has done; God *hates robbery for burnt-offerings*, and we must first *do justly* and then *love mercy*. It is no charity but hypocrisy to give that which we have not come honestly by; nor that our own which is not so, when all our debts are paid and restitution made for wrongs done.

Sixthly, Christ's *approbation* and *acceptance* of Zaccheus's conversion, by which also he cleared himself from any imputation in going to be a guest with him, ver. 9, 10.

1. Zaccheus is declared to be now a *happy man*; now he is turned from sin to God, now he has bid Christ welcome to his house, and is become an honest charitable good man, *This day is salvation come to this house*. Now he is *converted*, he is an effect *saved*, saved from his sins, from the guilt of them, from the power of them, all the benefits of salvation are his; Christ is come to *his house*, and where Christ comes he brings salvation along with him; he is and will be the *author of eternal salvation*, to all that own him as Zaccheus did. Yet this is not all: *Salvation this day comes to his house*. (1.) When Zaccheus becomes a convert, he will be more than he had been, a *blessing to his house*. He will bring the means of grace and salvation to his house, for he is a son of Abraham indeed now, and therefore, like Abraham, will teach his household to *keep the way of the Lord*. He that is *greedy of gain troubleth his own house*, and brings a curse upon it, Hab. ii. 9. But he that is charitable to the poor, doth a kindness to his own house, and brings a blessing upon it, and salvation to it, temporal at least, Psalm cxxii. 3. (2.) When Zaccheus is brought to Christ himself, his family also became related to Christ, and his children are admitted members of his church, and so *salvation comes to his house*: for he that is a *son of Abraham*, and therefore interested in God's covenant with Abraham, that *blessing of Abraham* which comes upon the publicans *upon the Gentiles*, through faith, that God will be a God to them and to their children, and therefore when he believes, salvation comes to his house, as to the gaoler's, to whom it was said, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thine house*, Acts xvi. 31. Zaccheus is by birth a son of Abraham, but being a publican he was deemed a heathen, they were put upon a level, Matt. xviii. 17. And as such the Jews were shy of conversing with him, and expected Christ should be so; but he shews, that being a true penitent he is become *renewed in curia*, as good a son of Abraham as if he had never been a publican, which therefore ought not to be mentioned against him.

2. What Christ had done to make him, in particular, a happy man was consonant to the great design and intention of his coming into the world, ver. 10. with the same argument he had before justified his conversing with publicans, Matt. ix. 13. There he pleaded, that he came to *call sinners to repentance*; now that he came to *seek and save that which is lost*; *το ἀπολωλῶς, the lost thing*. Observe, (1.) The *deplorable case* of the *sons of men*; they were lost; but here the whole race of mankind is spoken of as *one body*. Note, The whole world of mankind, by the fall, is become a *lost world*.

world. Lost as a city is lost when it is revolted to the rebels; as a traveller is lost when he has mist his way in a wilderness; lost, as a sick man is lost, when his disease is incurable; or as a prisoner is lost when sentence is passed upon him. (2.) The gracious design of the Son of God, he came to seek and save, to seek in order to saving. He came from heaven to earth (a long journey!) to seek that which was lost, i. e. which had wandered and gone astray, and to bring it back, *Matt. xviii. 11, 12.* and to save that which was lost, i. e. which was perishing, and in a manner destroyed and cut off. Christ undertook the cause when it was given up for lost, undertook to bring those to themselves that were lost to God and all goodness. Observe, Christ came into this lost world to seek and save it. His design was to save when there was not salvation in any other. And in prosecuting of that design he sought, took all probable means to effect that salvation. He seeks those that were not worth seeking to; he seeks those that sought him not and asked not for him, as to Zaccheus here.

11. And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. 12. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. 13. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. 14. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. 15. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. 17. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. 18. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. 19. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. 20. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: 21. For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layest not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. 22. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knowest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: 23. Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? 24. And he said unto him that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. 25. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) 26. For I say unto you, that unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. 27. But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

Our Lord Jesus is now upon his way to Jerusalem, to his last passover, when he was to suffer and die. Now here we are told,

1. How the expectations of his friends were raised upon this occasion. They thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear, *ver. 11.* The Pharisees expected it about this time, *chap. xvii. 20.* and it seems so did Christ's own disciples; but they both had a mistaken notion of it: The Pharisees thought it must be introduced by some other temporal prince or potentate: The disciples thought their Master should introduce it, but with temporal pomp and power, which with the power he had to work miracles, they knew he could clothe himself with in a short time, whenever he pleased. Jerusalem they concluded must be the seat of his kingdom, and therefore now he is going directly thither, they doubt not but in a little time to see him upon the throne here. Note, Even good men are subject to mistakes concerning the kingdom of Christ, and to form wrong notions of it, and are ready to think that should immediately appear which is reserved for hereafter.

2. How their expectations were checked, and the mistakes rectified upon which they were founded; and this he doth in three things,

First, They expected that he should appear in his glory now presently, but he tells them he must not be publicly installed in his kingdom of a great while yet. He is like a certain nobleman, *οὐδὲν ἔτι εὐρυνης, a certain man of high birth, so Dr. Hammond,* for he is the Lord from heaven, and is entitled by birth to the kingdom; but he goes into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom. Christ must go to heaven to sit down at the right hand of the Father there, and to receive from him honour and glory, before the Spirit was poured out, by which his kingdom was to be set upon earth, and before a church was to be set up for him in the Gentile world: He must receive the kingdom, and then return: Christ returned when the Spirit was poured out; when Jerusalem was destroyed, by which time that generation both of friends and enemies, which he had personally converted with, was wholly worn off by death, and gone to give up their account. But his chief return here meant, is that at the great day, which we are yet in expectation of. That which they thought should immediately appear, Christ tells them will not appear, till this same Jesus, which is taken into heaven, shall in like manner come again; see *Acts i. 11.*

Secondly, They expected that his apostles and immediate attendants should be advanced to dignity and honour; that they should all be made princes and poets, privy-counsellors and judges, and have all the pomp and preferments of the court, and of the town; but Christ here tells them, that instead of that he designed them to be men of business, they must expect no other preferment in this world, but that of the trading end of the town;

he would set them up with a stock under their hands, that they might employ it to themselves in serving him and the interest of his kingdom among men. That is the true honour of a Christian and a minister, which if we be, as we ought to be, truly ambitious of, we shall be able to look upon all temporal honours with a holy contempt. The apostles had dreamed of sitting on his right hand and on his left, in his kingdom, enjoying ease after their present toil, and honour after the present contempt put upon them, and were pleasing themselves with this dream; but Christ tells them that which if they understood it aright, would fill them with care and concern and serious thoughts, instead of those aspiring ones they filled their heads with.

1. They have a great work to do now; their Master leaves them to receive his kingdom, and at parting he gives each of them a pound, which the margin of our common bibles tells us, amounts in our money to three pounds and half a crown; this signifies the same thing with the talents in the parable that is parallel to this, *Matt. xxv.* all the gifts with which Christ's apostles were endued, and the advantages and capacities they had, of serving the interests of Christ in the world, and others, both ministers and Christians, like them in a lower degree. But perhaps it is in the parable thus represented, to make them the more humble; their honour in this world is only that of traders, and not that of topping merchants, that have a vast stocks to begin upon, but that of poor traders, that must take a great deal of care and pains to make any thing of what they have.

He gave these pounds to his servants, not to buy rich liveries, much less robes, and a splendid equipage for themselves to appear in, as they expected, but with this charge, *Occupy till I come.* Or, (as it might much better be translated) *Trade till I come, πρὸς πωλείν, be busy.* So the word properly signifies, you are sent forth to preach the gospel, to set up a church for Christ in the world, to bring the nations to the obedience of faith, and to build them up in it; *Ye shall receive power to do this, for ye shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, Acts i. 8.* When Christ breathed on the eleven disciples, saying, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost,* then he delivered them ten pounds; now, saith he, mind your business, and make a business of it, set about it in good earnest and stick to it, lay out yourselves to do all the good you can to the souls of men, and to gather them in to Christ. Note, (1.) All Christians have business to do, for Christ in this world, and ministers especially; the one was not baptized, nor the other ordained to be idle. (2.) Those that are called to business for Christ, he furnisheth with gifts necessary for their business; and, on the other hand, those to whom he gives power from them he expects service. He deliver the pounds with this charge, go work, go trade. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal, *1 Cor. xii. 7.* And as every one has received the gifts, so let him minister the same, *1 Pet. iv. 10.* (3.) We must continue to mind our business till our Master comes, whatever difficulties or oppositions we may meet with in it; those only that endure to the end shall be saved.

2. They have a great account to make shortly. These servants are called to him, to shew what use they made of the gifts they were dignified with, what service they had done to Christ, and what good to the souls of men, that he might know what every man had gained by trading. Note, 1. They that trade diligently and faithfully in the service of Christ shall be gainers; we cannot say so of the business of the world, many a labouring tradesman has been a loser, but those that trade for Christ shall be gainers; though Israel be not gathered, yet they will be glorious. 2. The conversion of souls is the winning of them; every true convert is clear gain to Jesus Christ. Ministers are but factors for him, and to him they must give account what fish they have enclosed in the gospel-net; what guests they have prevailed with to come to the wedding-supper; that is, what they have gained by trading. Now in the account given up observe,

1. The good account which was given by some of the servants, and the master's approbation of them. Two such are instanced, *ver. 16-19.*

1. They had both made considerable improvements, but not both alike, one had gained ten pounds by his trading, and another five. Those that are diligent and faithful in serving Christ are commonly blessed in being made blessings to the place where they live. They shall see the travail of their soul, and not labour in vain. And yet all that are alike faithful are not alike successful. And perhaps though they were both faithful, it is intimated, that one of them took more pains and applied himself more closely to his business than the other, and sped accordingly; blessed Paul sure was this servant that gained ten pounds, double to what any of the rest did, for he laboured more abundantly than they all, and fully preached the gospel of Christ.

2. They both acknowledged their obligations to their Master, for intrusting them with these abilities and opportunities to do him service. Lord, it is not my industry, but thy pound that has gained ten pounds. Note; God must have all the glory of all our gains; not unto us, but unto him must be the praise, *Psal. cxv. 1.* Paul, who gained the ten pounds, acknowledges, *I laboured, yet not I. By the grace of God I am what I am, and do what I do, and his grace was not in vain, 1 Cor. xv. 10.* and will not speak of what he had done, but of what God had done by him, *Rom. xv. 18.*

3. They were both commended for their fidelity and industry, *Well done, thou good servant, ver. 17.* And to the other he said likewise, *ver. 19.* Note, They who do that which is good, shall have praise of the same. Do well, and Christ will say to thee, well done; and if he saith well done, the matter is not great who saith otherwise. See *Gen. iv. 7.*

4. They were preferred in proportion to the improvement they had made, *Because thou hast been faithful in a very little, and didst not say, as good fit still as go trade with one pound, what can one do with so small a stock, but didst humbly and honestly apply thyself to the improvement of that, have thou authority over ten cities.* Note, Those are in a fair way to rise, who are content to begin low. He that has used the office of a deacon well, purchaseth to himself a good degree, *1 Tim. iii. 13.* Two things are hereby promised the apostles. (1.) That when they have taken pains to plant many churches, they shall have the satisfaction and honour of presiding in them, and governing among them; they shall have great respect paid them, and have a great interest in the love and esteem of good Christians. He that keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof; and he that laboureth in the word and doctrine, shall be counted worthy of double honour. (2.) That when they have served their generation according to the will of Christ, though they pass through his world, despised and trampled upon, and perhaps pass out of it under disgrace and persecution, as the apostles did, yet in the other world they shall reign as kings with Christ, shall sit with him on his throne, shall have power over the nations, *Rev. ii. 26.* The happiness of heaven will be a much greater advancement to a good minister or Christian, than it would be to a poor tradesman, that with much ado had cleared ten pounds to be made governor of ten cities. He that had gained but five pounds, had dominion over five cities. This intimates that there are degrees of glory in heaven; every vessel will be alike full, but not alike large. And the degrees of glory there, will be according to the degrees of usefulness here.

2. The bad account that was given by one of them, and the sentence passed upon him, for his slothfulness and unfaithfulness, *ver. 20, &c.*

1. He owned that he had not *traded* with the pound with which he had been intrusted, *ver. 20. Lord, behold, here is thy pound*, it is true I have not made it *more*, but withal I have not made it *less*, I have kept it safe *laid up in a napkin*. This represents the carelessness of those who have gifts but never lay out themselves to do good with them; it is all one to them, whether the interests of Christ's kingdom sink or swim, go backward or forward, for their parts they will take no care about it, no pains, be at no expences, run no hazard; those are the servants that lay up their pound in a *napkin*; who think it is enough to say, they have done no hurt in the world, but *did no good*.

2. He justified himself in his omission, with a plea that made the matter worse and not better, *ver. 21. I feared thee, because thou art an austere man*, rigid and austere, *ἀνδραγαθὸς ὁ δούλος*; *austere* is the Greek word itself; a sharp man; *thou takest up that thou laidst not down*. He thought his master put a hardship upon his servants, when he required and expected the improvement of their pounds, and that it was *reaping where he did not sow*, whereas really it was reaping where he had sown, and, as the husbandman, expects in proportion to what he had sown. He had no reason to fear his master's austerity, nor blame his expectations, but this was a mere sham, a frivolous groundless excuse for his idleness, which there was no manner of colour for. Note, The pleas of slothful professors, when they come to be examined, will be found more to their *shame* than in their *justification*.

3. His excuse is turned upon him, *ver. 22. Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant*. He will be *condemned* by his crime, but *self-condemned* by his plea. If thou didst look upon it as hard, that I should expect the profits of thy trading, which would have been the greatest profit; yet, if thou hadst had any regard to my interest, thou mightest have put it *into the bank*, into some of the funds, that I might have had, not only *mine own*, but mine own *with usury*, which, though a *less* advantage, would have been *some*. If he durst not *trade*, for fear of *losing* the principal, and so being made accountable to his Lord for it, though it was lost, which he pretends, yet that would be no excuse for his not setting it out to interest, where it would be sure. Note, Whatever may be the pretences of slothful professors in excuse of their slothfulness, the true reason of it is a reigning indifference to the interests of Christ and his kingdom, and their coldness therein. They care not whether religion gets ground or loses ground, so they can but live at ease.

4. His pound is taken from him, *ver. 24. It is fit those should lose their gifts*, that will not *use* their gifts; and those who have dealt falsely, should be no longer trusted. Those that will not serve their Master with what he bestows upon them, why should they be suffered to serve themselves with it? *Take from him the pound*.

5. It is given to him that had got the *ten pounds*. And when this was objected against by the standers-by, because he had so much already, *Lord, he has ten pounds*, *ver. 25. it is answered, ver. 26. Unto every one that hath shall be given*. It is the rule of justice, (1.) That those should be most encouraged that have been most industrious, and that those who have laid out themselves most to do good, should have their opportunities of doing good *enlarged*, and be put into a higher and more extensive sphere of usefulness. To him that hath gotten shall more be given, that he may be in a capacity to get more. (2.) That those who have their gifts, as if they had them not, that have them to no purpose, that do no good with them, should be deprived of them. Those that endeavour to increase the grace they have, God will increase it; those that neglect it and suffer it to decline, can expect no other but that God should do so too. This needful warning Christ gives to his disciples, lest whilst they were gaping for honours on earth they should neglect their business, and so come short of their happiness in heaven.

Thirdly, Another thing they expected was, that when the kingdom of God should appear, the body of the Jewish nation should immediately fall in with it and submit to it, and all their aversions to Christ and his gospel should immediately vanish; but Christ tells them that after his departure, the generality of them would persist in their obstinacy and rebellion, and it would be their ruin. This is shewed here,

1. In the message which his citizens sent after him, *ver. 14. They not only opposed him while he was in obscurity*, but when he was gone in glory to be invested in his kingdom, then they continued their enmity to him, protested against his dominion, and said, *We will not have this man to reign over us*. (1.) This was fulfilled in the prevailing infidelity of the Jews after the ascension of Christ, and the setting up of the gospel kingdom; they would not submit their necks to his yoke, nor touch the top of his golden sceptre. They said, *Let us break his bands in sunder*, *Psal. ii. 1, 2, 3. Acts iv. 26.* (2.) It speaks the language of all unbelievers, they could be content that Christ should *save them*, but they will not have him to *reign over them*; whereas Christ is a Saviour to those only to whom he is a prince, and who are willing to obey him.

2. In the sentence passed upon them at his return, *ver. 27. Those mine enemies bring hither*. When his faithful subjects are preferred and rewarded, then he will take vengeance on his enemies; and particularly on the Jewish nation, the doom of which is here read. When Christ had set up his gospel kingdom, and thereby put reputation upon the gospel ministry, then he comes to *reckon with the Jews*; then it is remembered against them, that they had particularly disclaimed and protested against his kingly office, when they say, *we have no king but Cæsar*, nor would own him for their king; they appealed to Cæsar, and to Cæsar they shall go; Cæsar shall be their ruin. Then the *kingdom of God appeared*, when vengeance was taken on those irreconcilable enemies to Christ and his government, they were *brought forth and slain before him*. Never was so much slaughter made in any wars as in the wars of the Jews. That nation lived to see Christianity victorious in the Gentile world, in spite of their enmity and opposition to it, and then it was *taken away as dross*. The wrath of Christ came upon them to the uttermost, *1 Thess. ii. 25, 26.* and their destruction redounded very much to the honour of Christ and the peace of the church. But this is applicable to all others who *persist* in their infidelity, and will undoubtedly perish in it. Note, 1. Utter ruin will certainly be the portion of all Christ's enemies; in the day of vengeance they shall all be *brought forth and slain before him*. Bring them hither to be made a spectacle to saints and angels, see *Josh. x. 22, 24. Bring them hither* that they may see the glory and happiness of Christ and his followers, whom they hated and persecuted. Bring them hither to have their frivolous pleas over-ruled, and to receive sentence according to their merits. Bring them, and *slay them before me*, as Agag before Samuel. The Saviour whom they have slighted will stand by and see them slain, and not interpose on their behalf. 2. Those that will not have Christ to *reign over them*, shall be reputed and dealt with as his enemies. We are ready to think none are Christ's enemies but persecutors of Christianity, or scoffers at least, but you see those will be accounted so that dislike the terms of salvation, will not submit to Christ's yoke, but will be their own masters. Note, Whoever will not be *ruled* by the grace of Christ, will inevitably be ruined by the wrath of Christ.

28. ¶ And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem. 29. And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called *the mount of Olives*, he sent two of his disciples, 30. Saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither. 31. And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him. 32. And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them. 33. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? 34. And they said, The Lord hath need of him. 35. And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. 36. And as they went, they spread their clothes in the way. 37. And when he was come in, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; 38. Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. 39. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. 40. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

We have here the same account of Christ's riding in some sort of triumph (such as it was) into Jerusalem, which we had before in Matthew and Mark, let us therefore here only observe,

1. That Jesus Christ was forward and willing to suffer and die for us. He went forward *bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem*, knowing very well the things that should befall him there, and yet he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem, *ver. 28.* He was the foremost of the company, as if he longed to be upon the spot, longed to engage, to take the field and to enter upon action. Was he so forward to suffer and die for us, and shall we draw back from any service we are capable of doing for him?

2. It was no ways inconsistent either with Christ's humility, or with his present state of humiliation, to make a *public entry* into Jerusalem a little before he died. Thus he made himself to be the more taken notice of, that the ignominy of his death might appear the greater.

3. Christ is intitled to a dominion over all the creatures, and may use them when and as he pleaseth. No man has a property in his estate against Christ, but that his title is prior and superior. Cæsar sent to fetch an *ass* and her colt from their owner's and master's crib, when he had occasion for their service, and might do so, for all the *beasts of the forests are his*, and the tame beasts too.

4. Christ has all mens hearts both under his eye and in his hand. He could influence those to whom the ass and the colt belonged to consent to their taking them away, as soon as they were told the Lord had occasion for them.

5. Those that go on Christ's errands are sure to speed, *ver. 32. They that were sent found what he told them they should find*, and the owners willing to part with them. It is a comfort to Christ's messengers, that what they are sent for, if indeed the Lord has occasion for it, they shall bring it.

6. The disciples of Christ, who fetch that for him from others whom he has occasion for, and which they have not, should not think that enough, but whatever they have themselves, wherewith he may be served and honoured, they should be ready to serve him with it. Many can be willing to attend Christ at other peoples expence, that care not at being at any charge upon him themselves; but those disciples not only fetched the ass's colt for him, but *cast their own garments upon the colt*, and were willing those should be used for his trappings.

7. Christ's triumphs are the matter of his disciples praises. When Christ came nigh to Jerusalem God put it of a sudden into the hearts of the *whole multitude of the disciples*, not to the twelve only, but abundance more that were disciples at large, *to rejoice and praise God*, *ver. 37.* and their *spreading their clothes in the way*, *ver. 36.* was a common expression of joy, as at the feast of tabernacles. Observe, (1.) What was the matter or occasion of their joy and praise. They praised God for *all the mighty works they had seen*, all the miracles Christ had wrought, especially the raising of Lazarus, which is particularly mentioned, *John xii. 17, 18.* That brought others to mind, for fresh miracles and mercies should revive the remembrance of the former. (2.) How they expressed their joy and praise, *ver. 38. Blessed be the King that comes in the name of the Lord*: Christ is the King, he comes in the name of the Lord, clothed with a divine authority, commissioned from heaven to give law and treat of peace; *blessed be he*. Let us praise him, let God prosper him. He is *blessed* for ever, and we will speak well of him. *Peace in heaven*, i. e. Let the God of heaven send peace and success to his undertaking, and then there will be *glory in the highest*. It will redound to the glory of the most high God, and the angels, the glorious inhabitants of the upper world will give him the glory of it. Compare this song of the saints on earth with that of the angels, *Luke ii. 14.* they both agree to give glory to God in the highest, there the praises of both center; the angels say, *on earth peace*, rejoicing in the benefit which men on earth have by Christ; the saints say, *peace in heaven*, rejoicing in the benefit which the angels have by Christ; such is the communion we have with the holy angels, that as they rejoice in the *peace on earth*, so we rejoice in the *peace in heaven*, the peace God makes in his high places, *Job xxv. 2.* and both in Christ, who hath reconciled all things to himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

8. Christ's triumphs and his disciples joyful praises of them are the vexation of proud Pharisees, that are enemies to him and his kingdom. There were some Pharisees among the *multitude*, that were so far from joining with them, that they were enraged at them, and Christ being a famous example of humility, they thought he would not admit such acclamations as these, and therefore expected that he should *rebuke his disciples*, *ver. 39.* But it is the honour of Christ, that as he despiseth the contempt of the proud, so he accepts the praises of the humble.

9. Whether men praise Christ or no, he will and shall and must be praised, *ver. 40. If these should hold their peace, and not speak the praises of the Messiah's kingdom, the stones would immediately cry out, rather than that Christ should not be praised; which was in effect literally fulfilled, when upon men's reviling Christ upon the cross, instead of praising him, and his own disciples sinking into a profound silence, the earth did quake, and the rocks rent. Pharisees would silence the praises of Christ, but they cannot gain their point, for as God can out of stones raise up children unto Abraham, so he can out of the mouths of those children perfect praise.*

41. ¶ And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, 42. Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. 43. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, 44. And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation. 45. And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought. 46. Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves. 47. And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the Scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him. 48. And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

The great ambassador from heaven is here making his public entry into Jerusalem, not to be respected there but to be rejected: he knew what a nest of vipers he was throwing himself into; and yet see here two instances of his love to that place, and his concern for it.

First, the tears he shed for the approaching ruin of the city, *ver. 41. When he was come near, he beheld the city and wept over it.* Probably it was when he was coming down the descent of the hill from the mount of Olives, where he had a full view of the city, the large extent of it, and the many stately structures in it, and his eye affected his heart, and his heart his eye again. See here, (1.) What a tender spirit Christ was of: we never read that he laughed, but we often find him in tears. In this very place his father David wept and those that were with him, though he and they were men of war. There are cases in which it is no disparagement to the stoutest of men to melt into tears. (2.) That Jesus Christ wept in the midst of his triumphs, *wept* when all about him were rejoicing, to show how little he was elevated with the applause and acclamation of the people. Thus he would teach us to rejoice with trembling, and as though we rejoice not. If providence do not stain the beauty of our triumphs, we may ourselves see cause to fully it with our sorrows. (3.) That he wept over Jerusalem. Note, There are cities to be wept over, and none to be more lamented than Jerusalem, that had been the holy city and the joy of the whole earth, if it be degenerated. But why did Christ weep at the sight of Jerusalem, was it because yonder is the city in which I must be betrayed and bound, scourged, and spit upon, condemned and crucified? No, he himself gives us the reason of his tears.

1. Jerusalem has not improved the day of her opportunities. He wept and said, *If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, if thou wouldst but yet know while the gospel is preached to thee, and salvation offered thee by it; if thou wouldst at length bethink thyself and understand the things that belong to thy peace, the making of thy peace with God, and the securing of thine own spiritual and eternal welfare; but thou dost not know the day of thy visitation, ver. 41.* The manner of speaking is abrupt; *if thou hadst known.* O that thou hadst, so some take it; like that, *O that my people had hearkened unto me, Psal. lxxxi. 13. Isa. xlviii. 18.* Or, *if thou hadst known,* well, like that of the fig tree, *Luke xiii. 9.* how happy had it been for thee! Or, *if thou hadst known,* then wouldst have wept for thyself, and I should have no occasion to weep for thee, but should have rejoiced rather; what he saith, lays all the blame of Jerusalem's impending ruin upon herself. Note, 1. There are things that belong to our peace, which we are all concerned to know and understand; the way how peace is made, the offers made of peace, the terms on which we may have the benefit of peace. The things that belong to our peace, are those things that relate to our present and future welfare; these we must know with application. 2. There is a time of visitation, when those things which belong to our peace may be known by us, and known to good purpose. When we enjoy the means of grace in great plenty, as powerfully preached to us, when the spirit strives with us, and our own consciences are startled and awakened, then is the time of visitation, which we are concerned to improve. 3. Those that have long neglected the time of their visitation, if at length, if at last in this their day their eyes be opened, and they bethink themselves, all will be well yet. Those shall not be refused that come into the vineyard at the eleventh hour. 4. It is the amazing folly of multitudes that enjoy the means of grace, and it will be of fatal consequence to them, that they do not improve the day of their opportunities. The things of their peace are revealed to them, but are not minded or regarded by them; they hide their eyes from them, as if they were not worth taking notice of. They are not aware of the accepted time and the day of salvation; and so let it slip and perish through mere carelessness. None so blind as those that will not see, nor have any of the things of their peace more certainly hid from their eyes, than those that turn their back upon them. 5. The sin and folly of those that persist in a contempt of gospel grace, is a great grief to the Lord Jesus, and should be so to us. He looks with weeping eyes upon lost souls that continue impenitent, and run headlong upon their own ruin; he had rather they would turn and live than go on and die, for he is not willing any should perish.

2. Jerusalem cannot escape the day of her desolation. The things of her peace are now in a manner hid from her eyes; they will be shortly. Not but that after this the gospel was preached to them by the apostles, *all the house of Israel* were called to know assuredly that Christ was their peace. Acts ii. 36. and multitudes were convinced and converted. But as to the body of the nation, and the leading part of it, it was sealed up under unbelief, God had given them the spirit of slumber, *Rom. xi. 8.* They were so prejudiced and enraged against the gospel, and those few that did embrace it then, nothing less than a miracle of divine grace (like that which converted Paul) would work upon them; and it could not be expected such a miracle should be wrought, and so they were justly given up to judicial blindness and hardness. The peaceful things are not hid from the eyes of particular

persons; but it is too late to think now of the nation of the Jews as such, becoming a Christian nation; by embracing Christ.

And therefore they are marked for ruin, which Christ here foresees and foretels, as the certain consequence of their rejecting Christ. Note, Neglecting the great salvation often brings temporal judgments upon a people; it did so upon Jerusalem in less than forty years after this; when all that Christ here foretold was exactly fulfilled. (1.) The Romans besieged the city, *cast a trench about it, compassed it round, and kept their inhabitants in on every side.* Josephus relates, that Titus ran up a wall in a very short time, which surrounded the city, and cut off all hopes of escaping. (2.) They laid it even with the ground. Titus commanded his soldiers to dig up the city, and the whole compass of it was levelled, except three towers; see Josephus's history of the wars of the Jews, *Lib. v. cap. 27. Lib. vii. cap. 1.* Not only the city but the citizens were laid even with the ground, *thy children within thee, by the cruel slaughters that were made of them.* And there was scarce one stone left upon another. This was for their crucifying Christ (this was because they knew not the day of their visitation). Let other cities and nations take warning.

Secondly, The zeal he shewed for the present purifying of the temple. Though it must be destroyed ere long, it doth not therefore follow that no care must be taken of it in the mean time.

1. Christ cleared it of those who profaned it. He went straight to the temple, and began to cast out the buyers and sellers, *ver. 45.* Hereby (though he was represented as an enemy to the temple, and that was the crime laid to his charge before the high priest) he made it appear, that he had a truer love for the temple than they had who had such a veneration for its corban, its treasury, as a sacred thing; for its purity was more its glory than its wealth was. Christ gave a reason for his dislodging the temple-merchants, *ver. 46.* The temple is a house of prayer set apart for communion with God: the buyers and sellers made it a den of thieves, by the fraudulent bargains they made there, which was by no means to be suffered, for it would be a distraction to those who came there to pray.

2. He put it to the best use that ever it was put to, for he taught daily in the temple, *ver. 47.* Note, It is not enough that the corruptions of a church be purged out, but the preaching of the gospel must be encouraged. Now when Christ preached in the temple, Observe here,

1. How spiteful the church-rulers were against him; how industrious to seek an opportunity or pretence, rather to do him a mischief, *ver. 47.* The chief priests and Scribes, and the chief of the people, i. e. the great Sanhedrin that should have attended him, and summoned the people too to attend him, they sought to destroy him, and put him to death.

2. How respectful the common people were to him. They were very attentive to hear him; he spent most of his time in the country, and did not then preach in the temple, but when he did, the people paid him great respect; attended on his preaching with diligence, and let no opportunity slip of hearing him; attended to it with care, and would not lose a word. Some read it, *All the people as they heard him took his part;* and so it comes in very properly, as a reason why his enemies could not find what they might do against him: they saw the people ready to fly in their faces, if they offered him any violence. Till his hour was come, his interest in the common people protected him: but when his hour was come, the chief priest's influence upon the common people delivered him up.

C H A P. XX.

In this chapter we have, (1.) Christ's answer to the chief priest's question concerning his authority, *ver. 1—8.* (2.) The parable of the vineyard let out to the unjust and rebellious husbandmen, *ver. 9—19.* (3.) Christ's answer to the question proposed to him concerning the lawfulness of paying tribute to Caesar, *ver. 20—26.* (4.) His vindication of the great fundamental doctrine of the Jewish and Christian institutes, the resurrection of the dead and the future state, from the foolish cavils of the Sadducees, *ver. 27—38.* (5.) His puzzling the Scribes with a question concerning the Messiah's being the Son of David, *ver. 39—44.* (6.) The caution he gave his disciples to take heed of the Scribes, *ver. 45—47.* All which passages we had before in Matthew and Mark, and therefore need not enlarge upon them here, unless on those particulars which we had not there.

1. **A**ND it came to pass, that on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and Scribes came upon him with the elders, 2. And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority? 3. And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me: 4. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? 5. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not? 6. But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet. 7. And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was. 8. And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

In this passage of story nothing is added here to what we had in the other evangelists: but only in the first verse, where we are told,

1. That he was now teaching the people in the temple, and preaching the gospel. Note, Christ was a preacher of his own gospel. He not only purchased the salvation for us, but published it to us, which is a great confirmation of the truth of the gospel, and gives abundant encouragement to us to receive it; for it is a sign the heart of Christ was much upon it to have it received. This likewise puts an honour upon the preachers of the gospel, and upon their office and work, how much soever it is despised by a vain world. It puts an honour upon the popular preachers of the gospel: Christ condescended to the capacities of the people in preaching the gospel, and taught them. And observe, when he was preaching the gospel to the people, he had this interruption given him. Note, Satan and his agents do all they can to hinder the preaching the gospel to the people, for nothing weakens the interest of Satan's kingdom more.

2. That his enemies are here said to come upon him, *ἐπιερχομαι*, that word is used only here, and it intimates, (1.) That they thought to surprize him with this question, they came upon him suddenly, hoping to catch him unprovided with an answer, as if this were not a thing he had himself thought of. (2.) That they thought to frighten him with this question. They came

upon him in a body with violence. But how could he be terrified with the wrath of men, when it was in his own power to restrain it, and make it turn to his praise? From this story itself we may learn,

1. That it is not to be thought strange, if even that which is evident to a demonstration be disputed and called into question as a doubtful thing, by those that shut their eyes against the light. Christ's miracles plainly shewed by what authority he did these things, and sealed his commission, and yet this is that which is here arraigned.

2. Those that question Christ's authority, if they be but catechised themselves in the plainest and most evident principles of religion, will have their folly made manifest unto all men. Christ answered these priests and Scribes with a question concerning the baptism of John, a plain question, which the meanest of the common people could answer, *was it from heaven or of men?* They all knew it was *from heaven*, there was nothing in it that had an earthly relish or tendency, but it was all heavenly and divine. And this question gruelled them and run them aground, and served to shame them before the people.

3. Those that are governed by reputation and secular interest, it is not strange if they imprison the plainest truths, and smother and stifle the strongest convictions, as these priests and Scribes did, who, to save their credit, would not own that John's baptism was *from heaven*, and had no other reason why they did not say it was *of men*, but because they *feared the people*. What good can be expected from men of such a spirit?

4. Those that bury the knowledge they have, are justly denied further knowledge. They who knew the baptism of John to be from heaven, and would not believe in him, nor own their knowledge, it was just with Christ to refuse to give them an account of his authority, *ver. 7, 8.*

9. ¶ Then began he to speak to the people this parable; a certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time. 10. And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty. 11. And again he sent another servant; and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty. 12. And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out. 13. Then said the Lord of the vineyard, What shall I do! I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him. 14. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. 15. So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them? 16. He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said God forbid. 17. And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? 18. Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. 19. ¶ And the chief priests and the Scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.

Christ spoke this parable against those who were resolved not to own his authority; though the evidence of it was never so full and convincing; and it comes in very seasonably, to shew that by questioning his authority they forfeited their own. Their disowning the lord of their vineyard, was a defiance of their lease of the vineyard, and a giving up all their title.

1. The parable has nothing added here to what we had before in Matthew and Mark. The scope of it is to shew, that the Jewish nation, by persecuting the prophets, and at length Christ himself, had provoked God to take away from them all their church privileges, and to abandon them to ruin. It teacheth us,

1. That those who enjoy the privileges of the visible church, are as tenants and farmers that have a vineyard to look after, and rents to pay for it. God, by setting up revealed religion and instituted orders in the world, hath planted a vineyard, which he lets out to those people among whom his tabernacle is, *ver. 9.* And they have *vineyard work* to do, needful and constant work, but pleasant and profitable. Whereas man was for sin condemned to *till the ground*; they that have a place in the church are restored to that which was Adam's work in innocency, to *dress the garden* and to keep it, for the church is a paradise, and Christ the tree of life in it. They have also *vineyard fruits* to present to the lord of the vineyard. There are rents to be paid, and services to be done, which, though bearing no proportion to the value of the premises, yet must be *done*, and must be *paid*.

2. That the work of God's ministers is to call upon those that enjoy the privileges of the church, to *bring forth fruit* accordingly. They are God's rent-gatherers, to put the husbandmen in mind of their arrears, or rather to put them in mind that they have a landlord, who expects to hear from them, and to receive some acknowledgment of their dependence on him and obligations to him, *ver. 10.* The Old Testament prophets were sent on this errand to the Jewish church, to demand from them the duty and obedience they owed to God.

3. It has often been the lot of God's faithful servants to be wretchedly abused by his own tenants; they have been *beaten* and *treated shamefully* by those that resolved to *send them empty away*. They that are resolved not to do their duty to God, cannot bear to be called upon to do it. Some of the best men in the world have had the hardest usage from it, for their best services.

4. God sent his Son into the world to carry on the same work that the prophets were employed in, to *gather the fruits of the vineyard* for God, and one would have thought he should have been revered and received. The prophets spoke as *servants*, *Thus saith the Lord*; but Christ as a *son*, among his own, *Verily I say unto you*. Putting such an honour as this upon them, to send him, one would have thought should have won upon them.

5. Those that reject Christ's ministers, would reject Christ himself, if he should come to them; for it has been tried and found that the persecutors and murderers of his servants the prophets, were the persecutors and

murderers of him himself. They said, *This is the heir, come let us kill him*. When they slew the servants, there were other servants sent, but if we can but be the death of the son, there is never another son to be sent, and then we shall be no longer molested with these demands; we may have a quiet possession of the vineyard for ourselves. The Scribes and Pharisees promised themselves, that if they could but get Christ out of the way, they should for ever ride masters in the Jewish church; and therefore they took that bold step, they *cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him*.

6. The putting of Christ to death filled up the measure of the Jewish iniquity, and brought upon them ruin without remedy. No other could be expected but that God should *destroy those wicked husbandmen*. They began in *not paying their rent*, but then proceeded to beat and kill the servants, and at length their young master himself. Note, Those that live in the neglect of their duty to God, know not what degrees of sin and destruction they are running themselves into.

2. To the application of the parable is added here, which we had not before, their deprecation of the doom included in it, *ver. 16.* *When they heard it, they said, God forbid, &c.* Let not this be done, so it should be read; though they could not but own, that for such a sin such a punishment was just, and what might be expected, yet they could not bear to hear of it. Note, It is an instance of the folly and stupidity of sinners that they proceed and persevere in their sinful ways, though at the same time they have foresight and dread of the destruction that is at the end of that way. And see what a cheat they put upon themselves to think to avoid it by a cold *God forbid*, when they do nothing towards the preventing of it; but will this make the threatening of none effect? No, they shall know whose word shall stand, God's or theirs.

Now observe what Christ said in answer to this childish deprecation of their ruin. (1.) He *beheld them*. This is taken notice of only by this evangelist, *ver. 17.* He looked upon them with pity and compassion, grieved to see them cheat themselves thus to their own ruin. He *beheld them to see* if they would blush at their own folly, or if he could discern in their countenances any shew of relenting. (2.) He referred them to the scripture, *What is this then that is written?* How can you escape the judgment of God, when you cannot prevent the execution of him whom you despise and reject? The word of God hath said it, that *the stone which the builders rejected, is become the head of the corner*. The Lord Jesus will be exalted to the Father's right-hand, he has all judgment and all power committed to him, he is the corner-stone, and top-stone of the church, and it is his enemies can expect no other but to be destroyed; or even those that slight him, that stumble at him, and are offended in him, they *shall be broken*, it will be their ruin; but those that not only reject him, but hate and persecute him, as the Jews did, he will fall upon them, and crush them to pieces, *will grind them to powder*. The condemnation of spiteful persecutors will be much sorer than that of careless unbelievers.

Lastly, We are told how the chief priests and Scribes were exasperated by this parable, *ver. 19.* They perceived that he spoke this parable against them, and so he did. A guilty conscience needs no accuser; but they, instead of yielding to the convictions of conscience, fell into a rage at him who awakened that sleeping lion in their bosoms, and sought to lay hands on him. Their corruptions rebelled against their convictions, and got the victory. And it was because they had not any fear of God or of his wrath before their eyes, not only because they *feared the people*, that they did not now fly in his face, and take him by the throat. They were just ready to make his words good; *This is the heir, come let us kill him*. Note, When the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil, the finest warnings both of the sin they are about to commit, and of the consequences of it, make no impression upon them. Christ tells them, that instead of *kissing the Son of God* they would *kill him*, upon which they should have said, *What, is thy servant a dog?* But they do in effect say this, and so we will; have at him now. And though they deprecate the punishment of the sin, in the next breath they are projecting the commission of it.

20. ¶ And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor. 21. And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly: 22. Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar, or no? 23. But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me? 24. Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Cæsar's. 25. And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's. 26. And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.

We have here Christ's evading the snare which his enemies laid for him by proposing a question to him about tribute. We had this passage both in Matthew and Mark. Here is,

1. The mischief designed him, and that is more fully related here than before. The plot was to *deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor*, *ver. 20.* They could not themselves put him to death by course of law, nor otherwise than by a *popular tumult*, which they could not depend upon. And since they cannot be his judges, they will willingly condescend to be his persecutors and accusers, and will themselves *inform* against him. They hoped to gain their point, if they could but incense the governor against him. Note, It has been the common artifice of persecuting church rulers, to make the secular powers the tools of their malice, and oblige the *kings of the earth* to do their drudgery, who, if they had not been incited would have let their neighbours live quietly by them, as Pilate did Christ till the chief priests and the Scribes presented Christ to him. But thus Christ's words must be fulfilled by their cursed politics, that he should be *delivered into the hands of the Gentiles*.

2. The persons they employed. Matthew and Mark told us they were disciples of the Pharisees, with some Herodians: Here it is added, that they were *spies*, which would feign themselves just men. Note, It is no new thing for ill men to feign themselves just men, and to cover the most wicked project with most specious and plausible pretences. The devil can *transform himself into an angel of light*, and a Pharisee appear in the garb, and speak the language of a disciple of Christ. A spy must go in disguise. These spies must take on them to have a value for Christ's judgment, and

to depend upon it as an oracle, and therefore must desire his advice in a case of confidence. Note, Ministers are concerned to stand upon their guard against some that feign themselves to be *just men*, and to be *wise as serpents*, when they are in the midst of a *generation of vipers and scorpions*.

3. The question they proposed, with which they hoped to insnare him. (1.) Their preface is very courtly, *Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly*, ver. 21. Thus they thought to flatter him into an incautious freedom and openness with them, and so to gain their point. They that are proud and love to be commended, will be brought to do any thing for those that will but flatter them and speak them fair, but they were much mistaken who thought thus to impose upon the humble Jesus. He was not pleased with the testimony of such hypocrites, nor thought himself honoured by it. It is true, that he *accepts not the person of any*, but it is as true that he knows the hearts of all, and knew theirs, and the *seven abominations* that were there, though they *spoke fair*. It was certain that he *taught the way of God truly*; but he knew that they were unworthy to be taught by him, who came to *take hold of his words*, not to be *taken hold of* by them. 2. Their case is very nice: Is it lawful for us, (that is added here in Luke) to give tribute to Cæsar? for us Jews, us the free-born seed of Abraham, us that pay the Lord's tribute, may we give tribute to Cæsar? Their pride and covetousness made them loth to pay taxes, and then they would have it a question, whether it was lawful or no? Now if Christ should say *it was lawful*, the people would take it ill, who expected that he who set up to be the Messiah should in the first place free them from the Roman yoke, and stand by them in denying tribute to Cæsar: But if he should say *it was not lawful*, as they expected he would, (for if he had not been of that mind, they thought he could not have been so much the darling of the people as he was) then they should have something to accuse him of to the governor, which was what they wanted.

4. His evading of the snare which they laid for him. *He perceived their craftiness*, ver. 23. Note, Those that are most crafty in their designs against Christ and his gospel, cannot with all their art conceal them from his cognizance. He can see through the most political disguises, and so break through the most dangerous snare; for *surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird*. He did not give them a direct answer, but reproved them for offering to impose upon him, *Why tempt ye me?* and called for a piece of money, current money with the merchants; *shew me a penny*, and asked them whose money it was? whose stamp it bore? Who coined it? They owned, it is Cæsar's money: why then saith Christ, you should first have asked whether it was lawful to pay and receive Cæsar's money among yourselves, and to admit that to be the instrument of your commerce: But you having granted that by a common consent, you are concluded by your own act, and no doubt you ought to give tribute to him who furnished you with this convenience for your trade, protects you in it, and lends you the sanction of his authority for the value of your money. You must therefore *render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's*. In civil things you ought to submit to the civil powers, and so if Cæsar protects you in your civil rights by laws and the administration of justice, you ought to *pay him tribute*; but in sacred things God only is your king, you are not bound to be of Cæsar's religion; you must *render to God the things that are God's*, must worship and adore him only, and not any golden image that Cæsar sets up; and we must worship and adore him in such a way as he has appointed, and not according to the inventions of Cæsar. It is God only that has authority to say, *My son, give me thy heart*.

5. The confusion they were hereby put into, ver. 26. (1.) The snare is broke. *They could not take hold of his words before the people*. They could not fasten upon any thing wherewith to incense either the governor or the people against him. (2.) Christ is honoured; even the wrath of man is made to praise him. *They marvelled at his answer*, it was so discreet and unexceptionable, and such an evidence of that wisdom and sincerity which make the face to shine. (3.) Their mouths are stopped. *They hold their peace*. They had nothing to object, and durst ask him nothing else, lest he should shame and expose them.

27. ¶ Then came to him certain of the Sadducees, (which deny that there is any resurrection); and they asked him, 28. Saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, if any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. 29. There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children. 30. And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. 31. And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died. 32. Last of all the woman died also. 33. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife. 34. And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: 35. But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: 36. Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. 37. Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. 38. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.

This discourse with the Sadducees we had before, just as it is here, only that the description Christ gives of the future state is somewhat more full and large here. Observe here,

1. That in every age there have been men of corrupt minds, that have endeavoured to subvert the fundamental principles of revealed religion. As there are deists now, who call themselves free-thinkers, but are really false-thinkers; so there were Sadducees in our Saviour's time, that bantered the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come, though they were plainly revealed in the Old Testament, and were articles of the Jewish faith. The Sadducees deny that *there is any resurrection*; any *future state*; *avastasis*, may signify; not only no return of the body to life, but no continuance of the soul in life; no world of spirits, no state of recompence and retribution for what was done in the body. Take away this, and all religion falls to the ground.

2. It is common for those that design to undermine any truth of God, to perplex it and load it with difficulties: So those Sadducees here did, when they would weaken people's faith in the doctrine of the resurrection, they put a question upon the supposition of it, which they thought could not be answered either way to satisfaction. The case perhaps was matter of fact; however it might be so, of a woman that had *seven husbands*: Now in the resurrection, *whose wife shall she be?* Whereas it was not at all material whose she was, for when death puts an end to that relation, it is not to be resumed again.

3. There is a great deal of difference between the state of the children of men on earth and that of the children of God in heaven; a vast unlikeness between *this world* and *that world*; and we wrong ourselves, and wrong the truth of Christ, when we form our notions of that world of spirits by our present enjoyments in this world of sense.

1. The children of men in this world *marry, and are given in marriage*, *οἱ τοῦ αἰῶνος τῆς τῆς αἰῶνος τῆς αἰῶνος*, the children of this age, this generation, both good and bad, marry themselves, and give their children in marriage. Much of our business in this world, is to raise and build up families, and to provide for them: Much of our pleasure in this world is in our relations, our wives, and children; nature inclines to it; Marriage is instituted for the comfort of human life, here in this state where we carry bodies about with us. It is likewise a remedy against fornication, that natural desires might not become brutal, but be under direction and control. The children of this world are dying and going off the stage, and therefore they marry and give their children in marriage, that they may furnish the world of mankind with needful recruits, that as one generation passeth away another may come, and that they may have some of their own offspring to leave the fruit of their labours to; especially that the chosen of God in future ages may be introduced, for it is a *godly seed* that is sought by marriage, Mal. ii. 15. A seed to serve the Lord, that shall be a *generation to him*.

2. The world to come is quite another thing; it is called *that world*, by way of emphasis and eminency. Note, There are more worlds than one; a present visible world, and a future invisible world; and it is the concern of every one of us to compare worlds; *this world* and *that world*, and give the preference in our thoughts and cares to that which deserves it. Now observe,

1. Who shall be the inhabitants of *that world*; they that shall be *accounted worthy to obtain it*, i. e. that are interested in *Christ's merit*, who *purchased it for us*, and have a holy *meetness* for it wrought in them by the Spirit, whose business it is to prepare us for it. They have not a *legal* worthiness upon the account of any thing in them or done by them, but an *evangelical* worthiness upon the account of the inestimable price which Christ paid for the *redemption of the purchased possession*. It is a worthiness imputed, by which we are glorified, as well as a righteousness imputed, by which we are justified; *δικαιοσύνη*, they are made agreeable to *that world*. The disagreeableness that there is in the corrupt nature is taken away, and the dispositions of the soul are by the grace of God conformed to that state. They are by grace made and counted *worthy to obtain that world*; it intimates some difficulty in reaching after it, and danger of coming short. We must *so run* as that we may obtain. They shall obtain the *resurrection from the dead*, i. e. the blessed resurrection; for that of *condemnation*, as Christ calls it, John v. 29. is rather a resurrection to death, a second death, an eternal death, than *from death*.

2. What shall be the happy state of the inhabitants of that world, we cannot conceive or express it, 1 Cor. ii. 9. See what Christ here saith of it.

1. They *neither marry, nor are given in marriage*. Those that are entered into the joy of their Lord, are entirely taken up with that, and need not the joy of the bridegroom in his bride. The love in that world of love is all seraphic, and such as eclipseth and loseth the purest and most pleasing loves we entertain ourselves with in this world of sense: where the body itself shall be a spiritual body, the delights of sense are all vanished. And where there is a perfection of holiness, there is no occasion for marriage as a preservative from sin; into that *new Jerusalem* there enters nothing that defiles.

2. They cannot *die any more*; and this comes in as a reason why they do not marry. In this dying world there must be marriage, in order to the filling up of the vacancies made by death; but where there are no burials, there needs no weddings. This crowns the comfort of that world, that there is no more death there, which sullies all the beauty and damps all the comforts of this world. Here death reigns, but thence it is for ever excluded.

3. They are *equal unto the angels*. In the other evangelists it was said, they are *as the angels*, *ὡς ἀγγέλοι*, but here they are said to be *equal to the angels*, *ὡς ἀγγέλοι* angels peers; they have a glory and bliss no way inferior to that of the holy angels: They shall see the same sight, be employed in the same work, and share in the same joys with the holy angels. Saints, when they come to heaven, shall be *naturalized*, and though by nature strangers, yet having *obtained this freedom with a great sum*, which Christ paid for them, they have in all respects equal privileges with them that were free-born, the angels that are the natives, and aborigines of that country. They shall be companions with the angels, and converse with those blessed spirits that love them dearly, and to an innumerable company, to whom they are now come in faith, hope, and love.

4. They are the *children of God*, and so they are as the angels, who are called the *sons of God*: In the *inheritance of sons*, the *adoption of sons* will be completed. Hence believers are said to *wait for the adoption*, even the *redemption of the body*, Rom. viii. 23. For till the body is redeemed from the grave, the adoption is not completed. *Now are we the sons of God*, 1 John iii. 2. We have the nature and disposition of sons, but that will not be *perfected* till we come to heaven.

5. They are the *children of the resurrection*, i. e. they are made capable of the employments and enjoyments of the future state; they are *born to that world*, belong to that family, had their education for it here, and shall there have their inheritance in it. They are the *children of God*, being the *children of the resurrection*. Note, God owns those only for his children, that are the children of the resurrection, that are born from above, are allied to the world of spirits, and prepared for that world, who are the children of that family.

4. It is an undoubted truth, that there is another life after this, and there were eminent discoveries made of this truth in the early ages of the church, ver. 37, 38. *Moses shewed this, as it was shewed to Moses at the bush*, and he hath shewed it to us, when he calleth the Lord as the Lord calleth himself, the *God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*; *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, were then dead as to our world, they were departed out of it many years before, and their bodies were turned into dust in the cave of Macpelah; how then could God say, *not I was, but I am the God of Abraham?* It is absurd that the living God and fountain of life should continue related to them as their God, if there were no more of them in being but what lay in that cave, undistinguished from common dust; we must therefore conclude, that they were then in being in another world, for *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living*. Luke here adds, *for all live unto him*, i. e.

i. e. all that like them are true believers, though they are dead; yet they do live, their souls which return to God that gave them; Eccles. xii. 7. live to him as the Father of spirits: And their bodies shall live again at the end of time by the power of God; for he calleth things that are not as though they were, because he is the God that quickens the dead, Rom. iv. 17. But there is more in it yet; when God called himself the God of these patriarchs, he meant that he was their felicity and portion, a God all-sufficient to them, Gen. xvii. 1. their exceeding great reward, Gen. xv. 1. Now it is plain by their story, that he never did that for them in this world, which would answer the true intent and full extent of that great undertaking, and therefore there must be another life after this, in which he will do that for them as will amount to a discharge in full of that promise, that he would be to them a God; which he is able to do, for all live to him, and he has wherewithal to make every soul happy that lives to him; enough for all, enough for each.

39. ¶ Then certain of the Scribes answering, said, Master, thou hast well said. 40. And after that, they durst not ask him any question at all. 41. And he said unto them, How say they that Christ is David's son? 42. And David himself saith in the book of psalms, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 43. Till I make thine enemies thy foot-stool. 44. David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son? 45. ¶ Then in the audience of all the people, he said unto his disciples, 46. Beware of the Scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; 47. Which devour widows houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation.

The Scribes were students in the law, and expositors of it to the people; men in reputation for wisdom and honour, the generality of them were enemies to Christ and his gospel; now here we have some of them attending him, and four things we have in these verses concerning them, which we had before.

1. We have them here commanding the reply which Christ made to the Sadducees concerning the resurrection, ver. 39. *Certain of the Scribes said, Master, thou hast well said.* Christ had the testimony of his adversaries, that he said well; and therefore the Scribes were his enemies, because he would not conform to the traditions of the elders; but yet when he vindicated the fundamental practices of religion, and appeared in defence of them, even the Scribes commended his performance, and owned he said well. Many that call themselves Christians come short even of that spirit.

2. We have them here struck with an awe of Christ, and of his wisdom and authority, ver. 40. *They durst not ask him any questions at all,* because they saw that he was too hard for all that contended with him. His own disciples, though weak, yet being willing to receive his doctrine, durst ask him any question; but the Sadducees, who contradicted and cavilled at his doctrine, durst ask him none.

3. We have them here puzzled and run aground with a question concerning the Messiah, ver. 41. It was plain by many scriptures, that Christ was to be the Son of David; even the blind man knew that, chap. xiii. 39. and yet it was plain that David called the Messiah his Lord, ver. 42. 43. his owner, and ruler, and benefactor: *The Lord said to my Lord; God said it to the Messiah, Psalm cx. 1.* Now if he be his Son, why doth he call him his Lord? If he be his Lord, why do we call him his Son? This he left them to consider of, but they could not reconcile this seeming contradiction; thanks be to God we can; that Christ as God was David's Lord, but Christ as man was David's son: He was both the root and the offspring of David, Rev. xii. 16. By his human nature he was the offspring of David, a branch of his family; by his divine nature he was the root of David, from whom he had his being and life, and all the supplies of grace.

4. We have them here described in their black characters, and a public caution given to the disciples to take heed of them, ver. 45, 46, 47. This we had just as it is here, Mark xii. 38. and more largely, Matt. xxiii. Christ bid his disciples beware of the Scribes, i. e. 1. Take heed of being drawn into sin by them, of learning their way, and going into their measures; beware of such a spirit as they are governed by. Be not you such in the Christian church, as they are in the Jewish church. 2. Take heed of being brought into trouble by them; in the same sense that he had said, Matt. x. 17. *Beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils; beware of the Scribes, for they do so.* Beware of them, for,

1. They are proud and haughty; they desire to walk about the streets in long robes, as those that are above business, for men of business went with their loins girt up, and as those that take state and take place. *Cedant arma togæ.* They loved in their hearts to have people make their honours to them in the markets, that many might see what respect was paid them; and were very proud of the precedence that was given them in all places of course. They loved the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts, and when they were placed in them, looked upon themselves with great conceit, and upon all about them with great contempt. *I sit as a queen.*

2. They are covetous and oppressive, and make their religion a cloke and cover for it. They devour widows houses, get their estates into their hands, and then by some trick or other make them their own; or, they live upon them, and eat up what they have. And widows are an easy prey to them, because they are apt to be deluded by their specious pretences; for a shew they make long prayers, perhaps long prayers with the widows when they are in sorrow, as if they had not only a pious but a pious concern for them, and thus endeavour to ingratiate themselves with them, and get their money and effects into their hands. Such devout men sure may be trusted with untold gold; but they will give such an account of it as they think fit.

Christ reads them their doom in a few words, *These shall receive a more abundant judgment;* a double damnation, both for their abuse of the poor widows, whose houses they devoured; and for their abuse of religion, and particularly of prayer, which they had made use of as a pretence for the more plausible and effectual carrying on of their worldly and wicked projects; for *dissembled piety is double iniquity.*

C H A P. XXI.

In this chapter we have, (1.) The notice Christ took, and the approbation he gave of a poor widow that cast two mites into the treasury, ver. Vol. III. No. CLXXXI.

1—4. (2.) A prediction of future events, in answer to his disciples enquiries concerning them, ver. 5, 6, 7. 1. Of what should happen between that and the destruction of Jerusalem, false Christs arising, bloody wars and persecutions of Christ's followers, ver. 8—19. 2. Of that destruction itself, ver. 20—24. 3. Of the second coming of Jesus Christ to judge the world, under the type and figure of that, ver. 25—33. (3.) A practical application of this by way of caution and counsel, ver. 34, 35, 36. And an account of Christ's preaching, and the people's attendance on it, ver. 37, 38.

1. AND he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. 2. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. 3. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: 4. For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

This short passage of story we had before in Mark. It is thus recorded twice to teach us;

1. That charity to the poor is a main matter in religion; our Lord Jesus took all occasions to commend it and recommend it. He had just mentioned the baseness of the Scribes that devoured poor widows, chap. xx; and perhaps this is designed as an aggravation of it, that the poor widows were the best benefactors to the public funds, which the Scribes had the disposal of.

2. That Jesus Christ had his eye upon us, to observe what we give to the poor, and what we contribute to works of piety and charity. Christ, though intent upon his preaching, looked us to see what gifts were cast into the treasury, ver. 1. He observes whether we give largely and liberally, in proportion to what we have, and whether we be sneaking and paltry in it; nay, his eye goes further, he observes whether we give charitably and with a willing mind, or grudgingly and with reluctance. This should make us afraid of coming short of our duty in this matter; men may be deceived with excuses which Christ knows to be frivolous; and this should encourage us to be abundant in it, without desiring that men should know it; it is enough that Christ doth, he seeth in secret and will reward openly.

3. That Christ observes and accepts the charity of the poor in a particular manner. Those that have nothing to give may do a great deal in charity, by ministering to the poor, and helping them, and begging for them, that cannot help themselves, or beg for themselves: But here was one that was herself poor, and yet gave what little she had to the treasury. It was but two mites, which make a farthing; but Christ magnified it as a piece of charity exceeding all the rest. She has cast in more than they all. Christ doth not blame her for indiscrimination, in giving what she wanted herself, nor for vanity in giving among the rich to the treasury; but commended her liberality, and her willingness to part with what little she had for the glory of God; which proceeded from a belief of and dependence upon God's providence to take care of her. *Jehovah jireh, the Lord will provide.*

4. That whatever may be called the offerings of God, we ought to have a respect for, and to our power, yea, and beyond our power, to contribute cheerfully to. These have cast in unto the offerings of God. What is given to the support of the ministry and the gospel, to the spreading and propagating of religion, the education of youth, the release of prisoners, the relief of widows and strangers, and the maintenance of poor families, is given to the offerings of God, and it shall be so accepted and recompensed.

5. ¶ And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, v. As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. 7. And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass? 8. And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near; go ye not therefore after them. 9. But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by. 10. Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; 11. And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven. 12. But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. 13. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. 14. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: 15. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. 16. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you they shall cause to be put to death. 17. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. 18. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. 19. In your patience possess ye your souls.

See here, (1.) With what admiration some spake of the external pomp and magnificence of the temple, and they were some of Christ's own disciples too: and they took notice of it to him, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, ver. 5. The outside was built up with goodly stones, and within it was beautified and enriched with the presents that were offered up for that purpose, and were hung up in it. They thought their Master should be as much affected with those things as they were, and should as much regret the destruction of them as they did. When we speak of the temple

temple, it should be of the presence of God in it, and of the ordinances of God administered in it, and the communion which his people there have with him: it is a poor thing when we speak of the church to let our discourse dwell upon its pomps and revenues, and the dignities and powers of its officers and rulers; for the king's daughter is all *glorious within*.

(2.) With what contempt Christ spoke of them, and with what assurance of their being all made desolate very shortly, *ver. 6. As for these things which you behold, those dear things which you are so much in love with, behold, the days will come, and some now living may live to see them, in which there shall not be left one stone upon another.* This building which seems so beautiful, that one would think none could for pity pull it down, and which seems so strong, that one would think none should be able to pull it down, yet shall be utterly ruined; and this shall be done as soon as ever the spiritual temple of the gospel church (the substance of that shadow) begins to flourish in the world. Did we by faith foresee the blasting and withering of all external glory, we should not set our hearts upon it as those that cannot see or will not look so far before them.

(3.) With what curiosity those about him inquire concerning the time when this great desolation should be, *ver. 7. Master, when shall these things be?* It is natural to us to covet to know future things and the time of them, which it is not for us to know; when we are more concerned to ask what is our duty in the prospect of these things, and how we may prepare for them. This it is for us to know. They inquire *what sign there shall be, when these things shall come to pass.* They ask not for a present sign to confirm the prediction itself and to induce them to believe it, Christ's word was enough for that; but what the future signs will be of the approaching accomplishment of the prediction, by which they may be put in mind of it. These signs of the times Christ had taught them to observe.

(4.) With what clearness and fulness Christ answers their inquiries as far as was necessary to direct them in their duty; for all knowledge is desirable as far as it is in order to practice.

First, They must expect to hear of false christs and false prophets appearing, and false prophecies given out, *ver. 8. Many shall come in my name; he doth not mean in the name of Jesus*, though there were some deceivers who pretended commissions from him, as *Acts xix. 13.* but usurping the title and character of the Messiah. Many pretended to be the deliverers of the Jewish church and nation from the Romans, and to fix the time when the deliverance should be wrought, by which multitudes were drawn into a snare to their ruin. They shall say, *ἐγὼ εἰμι, That I am he, or, I am*, as if they would assume that incommunicable name of God, by which he made himself known, when he came to deliver Israel out of Egypt, *I am*; and to encourage people to follow them, they added, *the time draws near*, when the kingdom shall be restored to Israel, and if they will follow him they shall share in it.

Now as to this he gives them a needful caution, 1. *Take heed that ye be not deceived*; do not you imagine that I shall myself come again in external glory to take possession of the throne of kingdoms. No, you must not expect any such thing, for my kingdom is not of this world. When they asked solicitously and eagerly, *Master, when shall these things be?* The first word Christ said was, *Take heed that ye be not deceived.* Note, Those that are most inquisitive in the things of God (though it is very good to be so) yet are in most danger of being imposed upon, and have most need to be upon their guard. 2. *Go ye not after them*, you know the Messiah is come, and you are not to look for any other; and therefore do not so much as hearken after them, nor have any thing to do with them. If we are sure that Jesus is the Christ, and his doctrine is the gospel of God, we must be deaf to all intimations of another christ and another gospel.

Secondly, They must expect to hear of great commotions in the nations, and many terrible judgments inflicted upon the Jews and their neighbours. (1.) There shall be bloody wars, *ver. 10. Nation shall rise against nation*; one part of the Jewish nation against another, or rather the whole against the Romans. Encouraged by the false christs they shall wickedly endeavour to throw off the Roman yoke, by taking up arms against the Roman powers, when they had rejected the liberty with which Christ would have made them free, they were left to themselves to grasp at their civil liberty in ways that were sinful, and therefore could not be successful. (2.) There shall be earthquakes, great earthquakes in divers places, which shall not only frighten people, but destroy towns and houses, and bury many in the ruins of them. (3.) There shall be famines and pestilences, the common effects of war, which destroys the fruits of the earth, and by exposing men to ill weather and reducing them to ill diet, occasion infectious diseases. God has various ways of punishing a provoking people. The four sorts of judgments which the Old Testament prophets so often speak of, are threatened by the New Testament prophets too; for though spiritual judgments are more commonly inflicted in gospel-times, yet God makes use of temporal judgments also. (4.) There shall be fearful sights and great signs from heaven, uncommon appearances in the clouds, comets, and blazing stars, which frighten the ordinary sort of beholders, and have always been looked upon as ominous, and portending something bad.

Now as to these the caution he gives them is, *Be not terrified.* Others will be frightened at them, but be not you frightened, *ver. 2.* As to the fearful sights let not them be fearful to you, who look above the visible heavens to the throne of God's government in the highest heavens. *Be not dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the heathen are dismayed at them, Jer. x. 2.* And as to the famines and pestilences, you fall into the hands of God, who has promised to those who are his, that in the days of famine they shall be satisfied, and that he will keep them from the noisome pestilence; trust therefore in him and be not afraid. Nay, when you hear of wars, when without are fightings and within are fears, yet then be not you terrified; you know the worst that any of these judgments can do you, and therefore be not afraid of them; for, (1.) It is your interest to make the best of that which is, for all your fears cannot alter it, these things must first come to pass, there is no remedy, it will be your wisdom to make yourselves easy by accommodating yourselves to them. (2.) There is worse behind; flatter not yourselves with a fancy that you will soon see an end of these troubles, no, not so soon as you think of, the end is not by and by, not suddenly. Be not terrified, for if you begin so quickly to be discouraged, how will you bear up under what is yet before you?

Thirdly, They must expect to be themselves for signs and wonders in Israel; their being persecuted would be a prognostic of the destruction of the city and temple which he had now foretold. Nay, this should be the first sign of their ruin coming, *Before all these things they shall lay their hands on you.* The judgment shall begin at the house of God; you must smart first for warning to them; that if they have any consideration they may consider, *If this be done to the green tree, what shall be done to the dry?* See 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18. But that is not all; this must be considered not only as the sufferings of the persecuted, but as the sin of the persecutors: Before God's judgments are brought upon them, they shall fill up the measure of their iniquity by laying their hands on you. Note, The ruin of a people is always introduced by their sin; and nothing introduces a surer and forer ruin than the sin of persecution. This is a sign that God's wrath is coming upon a

people to the uttermost, when their wrath against the servants of God comes to the uttermost.

Now as to this,

1. Christ tells them what hard things they should suffer for his name's sake, much to the same purpose with what he had told them when he first called them to follow him, *Matt. x.* They should know the wages of it that they might sit down and count the cost. St. Paul, who was the greatest labourer and sufferer among them all, not being now among them, was told by himself what great things he should suffer for Christ's name's sake, *Acts ix. 16.* so necessary it is that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus should count upon persecution. The Christians having themselves been originally Jews, and still retaining an equal veneration with them for the Old Testament, and all the essentials of their religion, and differing only in ceremony, might expect fair quarter with them; but Christ bids them not expect it, no, they must be the most forward to persecute you. (1.) They shall use their own church-power against you, they shall deliver you up to the synagogues, to be scourged there, and stigmatized with their anathemas. (2.) They shall incense the magistrates against you; they shall deliver you into prisons, that you may be brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake, and be punished by them. (3.) Your own relations will betray you, *ver. 16. your parents, brethren, and kinsfolk and friends*; so that you will not know whom to put a confidence in or where to be safe. (4.) Your religion will be made a capital crime, and you will be called to resist unto blood; some of you shall they cause to be put to death: so far must you be from expecting honour and wealth, that you must expect nothing but death in its most frightful shapes, death in all its dreadful pomp. Nay, (5.) You shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; this is worse than death itself, and was fulfilled when the apostles were not only appointed to death, but made a spectacle to the world, and counted as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things, which every body lothes, 1 Cor. iv. 9—13. They were hated of all men, i. e. of all ill men, who could not bear the light of the gospel, because it discovered their evil deeds, and therefore hated those who brought in that light, flew in their faces, and would have pulled them to pieces. The wicked world that hated to be reformed hated Christ the great reformer, and all that were his for his sake. The rulers of the Jewish church knowing very well that if the gospel obtained among the Jews, their usurped abused power was at an end, raised all their forces against it, put it into an ill name, filled people's minds with prejudices against it, and so made the preachers and professors of it odious to the mob.

2. He encourageth them to bear up under their trials, and to go on in their work, notwithstanding the opposition they would meet with.

1. God will bring glory both to himself and them out of their sufferings, *ver. 13. It shall turn to you for a testimony.* Your being set up thus for a mark and publicly persecuted, will make you and your doctrine and miracles the more taken notice of and inquired into; your being brought before kings and rulers will give you an opportunity of preaching the gospel to them, who otherwise would never have come within hearing of it; your suffering such severe things, and being so hated by the world of men, of the most vicious lives, will be a testimony that you are good, else you would not have such ill men your enemies: your courage and cheerfulness, and constancy under your sufferings, will be a testimony for you that you believe what you preach, and that you are supported by a divine power, and the Spirit of God and glory rests upon you.

2. God will stand by you and own you, and assist you in your trials; you are his advocates, and you shall be well furnished with instructions, *ver. 14, 15.* Instead of setting your hearts on work to contrive an answer to informations, indictments, articles, accusations, and interrogatories, that will be exhibited against you in the ecclesiastical and civil courts, on the contrary, settle it in your hearts, impress it upon them, take pains with them to persuade them not to meditate before what ye shall answer, i. e. do not depend upon your own wit and ingenuity, your own prudence and policy, and do not distrust or despair of the immediate and extraordinary aids of the divine grace. Think not to bring yourselves off in the cause of Christ as you would in a cause of your own by your own parts and application, with the common assistance of divine providence, but promise yourselves for I promise you the special assistance of divine grace; *I will give you a mouth and wisdom.* This proves Christ to be God, for it is God's prerogative to give wisdom, and he it is that made man's mouth. Note, (1.) A mouth and wisdom together completely fit a man both for services and sufferings. Wisdom to know what to say, and a mouth wherewith to say it as it should be said. It is a great happiness to have both matter and words wherewith to honour God and do good; to have in the mind a store-house well furnished with things new and old, and a door of utterance, by which to bring them forth. (2.) Those that plead Christ's cause may depend upon him to give them a mouth and wisdom, which way soever they are called to plead it, especially when they are brought before magistrates for his name's sake. It is not said he will send an angel from heaven to answer for them, though he could do that, but he will give them a mouth and wisdom to enable them to answer for themselves; which puts a greater honour upon them, which requires them to use the gifts and graces Christ furnisheth them with, and redounds the more to the glory of God, who stills the enemy and the avenger out of the mouths of babes and sucklings. (3.) When Christ gave to his witnesses a mouth and wisdom, they are enabled to say that both for him and themselves, which all their adversaries are not able to gainsay nor resist, so that they are silenced and put to confusion. This was remarkably fulfilled presently after the pouring out of the Spirit, by whom Christ gave his disciples this mouth and wisdom, when the apostles were brought before the priests and rulers, and answered them so as to make them ashamed, *Acts iv. v. and vi.*

3. You shall suffer no real damage by all the hardships they shall put upon you, *ver. 18. There shall not a hair of your head perish.* Shall some of them lose their heads, and yet lose not a hair? It is a proverbial expression, speaking the greatest indemnity and security imaginable; it is frequently used both in the Old Testament and New in that sense. Some think it refers to the preservation of the lives of all the Christians that were among the Jews, when they were cut off by the Romans; historians tell us there was not one Christian perished in that desolation. Others reconcile it with the deaths of multitudes in the cause of Christ, and take it figuratively in the same sense that Christ saith, *He that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it.* Not a hair of your head shall perish, but, (1.) I shall take cognizance of it; to this end he had said, *Matt. x. 30. the hairs of your head are all numbered*, and an account is kept of them, so that none of them shall perish but he will miss it. (2.) It shall be upon a valuable consideration; we do not reckon that lost or perishing which is laid out for good purposes, and will turn to a good account. If we drop the body itself for Christ's name's sake, it doth not perish, but is well bestowed. (3.) It shall be abundantly recompensed; when you come to balance profit and loss you will find there is nothing perished; but on the contrary you have great gain in present comforts, especially in the joy of a life eternal. So that though we may be losers for Christ, we shall not, we cannot be losers by him in the end.

4. It is therefore your duty and interest, in the midst of your own sufferings

serings and those of the nation; to maintain a holy sincerity and serenity of mind, which will keep you always easy: *ver. 19. In your patience possess ye your souls*; get and keep possession of your souls. Some read it as a promise, you may or shall possess your souls: It comes all to one. Note, 1. It is our duty and interest at all times, especially in perilous trying times, to secure the possession of our own souls; not only that they be not destroyed and lost for ever, but that they be not discompoised now, nor our possession of them disturbed and interrupted. *Possess your souls*, i. e. be your own men; keep up the authority and dominion of reason, and keep under the tumults of passion, that neither grief nor fear may tyrannize over you, or turn you out of the possession and enjoyment of yourselves. In difficult times, when we can keep possession of nothing else; then let us make that sure which will be made sure, and keep possession of our souls. 2. It is by patience, Christian patience, that we keep possession of our own souls. In suffering times let patience upon the guard for the preserving of your souls; by it keep your souls composed and in a good frame, and keep out all those impressions which would ruffle you and put you out of temper.

20. ¶ And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. 22. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. 25. ¶ And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; 26. Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. 27. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

Having given them an idea of the times for about thirty-eight years next ensuing, he here comes to shew them what all those things would issue in at last, namely the destruction of Jerusalem, and the utter dispersion of the Jewish nation: which would be a little day of judgment: a type and figure of Christ's second coming, which was not so fully spoken of here as in the parallel place, *Matt. xxiv.* yet glanced at; for the destruction of Jerusalem would be as it were the destruction of the world to those whose hearts were bound up in it.

1. He tells them that they should see Jerusalem besieged, compassed with armies, *ver. 20.* the Roman armies; and when they saw that, they might conclude that *its desolation was nigh*, for in that the siege would infallibly end, though it might be a long siege. Note, As in mercy, so in judgment, when God begins he will make an end.

2. He warns them upon this signal given to shift for their own safety, *ver. 21.* Then let them which are in Judea quit the country and flee to the mountains; let them which are in the midst of it, i. e. of Jerusalem, depart out, before the city be closely shut up, and (as we say now) before the trenches be opened: and let not them that are in the countries and villages about enter into the city, thinking to be safe there. Do you abandon a city and country, which you see God has abandoned and given up to ruin. Come out of her, my people.

3. He foretells the terrible havock that should be made of the Jewish nation, *ver. 22.* Those be the days of vengeance so often spoken of by the Old Testament prophets, which would complete the ruin of that provoking people; all their predictions must now be fulfilled; and the blood of all the Old Testament martyrs must now be required; *All things that are written must be fulfilled at length.* After days of patience long abused, there will come days of vengeance; for reprieves are not pardons. The greatness of that destruction is set forth, (1.) By the inflicting cause of it, it is *wrath upon his people*, the wrath of God; that will kindle this devouring consuming fire. (2.) By the particular terror it would be to women with child, and poor mothers that are nurses. *Woe to them*, not only because they are most subject to frights, and least able to shift for their own safety, but because it will be a very great torment to them to think of having borne and nursed children for the murderers. (3.) By the general confusion that should be all the nation over. There shall be *great distress in the land*, for men will not know what course to take, nor how to help themselves.

4. He describes the issue of the struggles between the Jews and the Romans, and what they will come to at last; in short, (1.) Multitudes of them shall fall by the edge of the sword. It is computed in those wars of the Jews, there fell by the sword above eleven hundred thousand. And the siege of Jerusalem was in effect a military execution. (2.) The rest shall be led away captive, not into one nation as when they were conquered by the Chaldeans, which gave them an opportunity of keeping together, but into all nations, which made it impossible for them to correspond with each other, much less to incorporate. (3.) Jerusalem itself was trodden down of the Gentiles. The Romans, when they had made themselves masters of it, laid it quite waste, as a rebellious and bad city, hurtful to kings and provinces, and therefore hateful to them.

5. He describes the great frights that people should generally be in. Many frightful sights shall be in the sun, moon, and stars, prodigies in the heavens, and here in this lower world, the sea and the waves roaring, with terrible storms and tempests, such as had not been known, and above the ordinary working of natural causes. The effect of which shall be an universal confusion and consternation upon the earth, distress of nations, with perplexity, *ver. 25.* Dr. Hammond understands by the nations, the several governments or tetrarchies of the Jewish nation, Judaea, Samaria, and Galilee, these shall be brought to the last extremity. Men's hearts shall fail them for fear, *ver. 26.* *Men being quite examined, dispirited, unsouled, dying away for fear.* Thus they are killed all the day long, (by whom Christ's apostles were so, *Rom. viii. 36.*) that is, they are all the day

long in fear of being killed; sinking under that which lies upon them, and yet still trembling for fear of worse, and looking after those things which are coming upon the world; when judgment begins at the house of God; it will not end there; it shall be as if all the world were falling in pieces, and where can any be secure then? The powers of heaven shall be shaken, and then the pillars of the earth cannot but tremble. Thus shall the present Jewish policy, religion, laws, and government, be all intirely dissolved, by a series of unparalleled calamities, attended with the utmost confusion. So Dr. Clarke. But our Saviour makes use of these figurative expressions, because at the end of time they shall be literally accomplished, when the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and all their powers not only shaken, but broken, and the earth and all the works that are therein shall be burnt up, *2 Pet. iii. 10-12.* As that day was all terror and destruction to the unbelieving Jews, so the great day will be to all unbelievers.

6. He makes this to be a kind of appearing of the Son of man, *ver. 27.* Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. The destruction of Jerusalem was in a particular manner an act of Christ's judgment, the judgment committed to the Son of man; his religion could never be thoroughly established but by the destruction of the temple, and the abolishing of the Levitical priesthood and economy, after which even the converted Jews, and many of the Gentiles too, were still hankering, till they were destroyed; so that it might justly be looked upon as a coming of the Son of man in power and great glory; yet not visibly, but in the clouds; for in executing such judgments as these clouds and darknesses are round about him. Now this was, (1.) An evidence of the first coming of the Messiah, so some understand it. Then the unbelieving Jews shall be convinced when it is too late, that Jesus was the Messiah; that they would not see him coming in the power of his grace to save them, shall be made to see him coming in the power of his wrath to destroy them; that would not have him to reign over them, shall have him to triumph over them. (2.) It was an earnest of his second coming. Then in the terrors of that day they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud, and all the terrors of the last day. They shall see a specimen of it, a faint resemblance of it. If this be so terrible, what will that be?

7. He encourageth all the faithful disciples in reference to the terrors of that day, *ver. 28.* When these things begin to come to pass, when Jerusalem is besieged, and every thing is concurring to the destruction of the Jews, then do you look up, when others are looking down, look heavenwards in faith, hope, and prayer, and lift up your heads with cheerfulness and confidence, for your redemption draweth nigh. (1.) When Christ came to destroy the Jews, he came to redeem the Christians that were persecuted and oppressed by them; then had the churches rest. (2.) When he comes to judge the world at the last day, he will redeem all that are his from all their grievances. And the foresight of that day is as pleasant to all good Christians, as it is terrible to the wicked and ungodly. Their death itself is so, when they see that day approaching, they can lift up their heads with joy, knowing that their redemption draweth nigh, their remove to the Redeemer.

8. Here is one word of prediction that looks further than the destruction of the Jewish nation, which is not easily understood; we have it, *ver. 24.* that Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled. (1.) Some understand it of what is past; so Dr. Hammond. The Gentiles that have conquered Jerusalem shall keep possession of it, and it shall be purely Gentile, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, till a great part of the Gentile world is become Christian, and then after Jerusalem is rebuilt by Adrian the emperor, with an exclusion of all the Jews from it, many of the Jews shall turn Christians, shall join with the Gentile Christians, to set up a church in Jerusalem, which shall flourish there for a long time. (2.) Others understand it of what is yet to come; so Dr. Whitby. Jerusalem shall be possessed by the Gentiles, of one sort or other for the most part, till the time comes when the nations that yet remain infidels shall embrace the Christian faith, when the kingdoms of this world shall become Christ's kingdoms, and then all the Jews shall be converted; Jerusalem shall be inhabited by them, and neither they nor their city any longer trodden down by the Gentiles.

29. ¶ And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees; 30. When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. 31. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. 32. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. 33. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away. 34. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. 35. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. 37. And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives. 38. And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple; for to hear him.

Here, in the close of this discourse;

1. Christ appoints his disciples to observe the signs of the times, which they might judge by, if they had an eye to the foregoing directions, with as much certainty and assurance as they could judge of the approach of summer by the budding forth of the trees, *ver. 29, 30, 31.* As in the kingdom of nature there is a chain of causes, so in the kingdom of providence there is a consequence of one event upon another. When we see a nation filling up the measure of their iniquity, we may conclude their ruin is nigh; when we see the ruin of persecuting powers hastening on, we may from thence infer that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand, that when the opposition given to it is removed, it shall gain ground. As we may lawfully prognosticate the change of the seasons, when second causes have begun to work, so may in the disposal of events expect something uncommon, when God is already raised up out of his holy habitation, *Zech. ii. 13.* then stand still and see his salvation.

2. He chargeth them to look upon those things, neither as doubtful nor distant, for then they would not make a due impression on them, but as sure

sure and very near. The destruction of the Jewish nation, (1.) Was near, ver. 32. *This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled.* There were some now alive that should see it; some that now heard the prediction of it. (2.) It was sure, the sentence was irrevocable, it was a *consumption determined*, the decree was gone forth, ver. 33. *Heaven and earth shall pass away*, sooner than any word of mine: nay, they certainly shall pass away, but *my word shall not*: whether they take hold or no they will take effect, and not one of them fall to the ground, 1 Sam. iii. 19.

3. He cautions them against security and sensuality, by which they would disfit themselves for the trying times that were coming on, and make them to be a great surprize and terror to them, ver. 34, 35. *Take heed to yourselves*; this is the word of command given to all Christ's disciples, *Take heed to yourselves*, that you be not overpowered by temptations, nor betrayed by your own corruptions. Note, We cannot be *safe* if we be *secure*. It concerns us at all times, but especially at some times, to be very cautious. See here, (1.) What our danger is, that *the day of death and judgment should come upon us unawares*, when we do not expect it, and are not prepared for it; lest when we are called to meet our Lord, that he found the *furthest* thing from our thoughts, which ought always to be laid nearest our hearts, lest it come upon us as a *snare*; for so it will come upon the most of men who dwell upon the earth, and mind earthly things only, and have no converse with heaven; to them it will be as a *snare*; see Eccles. ix. 12. It will be a *terror* and a *destruction* to them; it will put them into an inexpressible fright, and hold them fast for a doom yet more frightful. (2.) What our duty is, in consideration of this danger; we must *take heed lest our hearts be overcharged*, lest they be burdened and overloaded, and so disfigured and disabled to do what must be done in preparation for death and judgment. Two things we must watch against, lest our hearts be overcharged with them. (1.) The indulging of the appetites of the body, and allowing ourselves in the gratifications of sense to an excess. *Take heed lest you be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness*, the immoderate use of meat and drink, which burden the heart, not only with the guilt thereby contracted, but by the ill-influence which such disorders of the body have upon the mind; they make men dull and lifeless to their duty, dead and listless in their duty; they stupify the conscience, and make the mind unaffected with those things that are most affecting. (2.) The inordinate pursuit of the good things of this world. The heart is overcharged with the *cares of this life*. The former is the snare of those that are given to their pleasures: this is the snare of the men of business, that *will be rich*. We have need to guard on both hands, not only lest at the time when death comes, but lest at any time our hearts should be thus overcharged. Our caution against sin, and our care of our own souls, must be constant.

4. He counsels them to prepare and get ready for this great day, ver. 36. where see, (1.) What should be our aim, that we may be accounted worthy to escape all those things, that when the judgments of God are abroad, we may be preferred from the malignity of them, that either we may not be involved in the common calamity, or it may not be that to us that it is to others: that in the day of death we may escape the sting of it, which is the wrath of God, and the damnation of hell. Yet we must aim, not only to escape that, but to stand before the Son of man; not only to stand acquitted before him as our judge, Psal. i. 5. to have boldness in the day of Christ, that is supposed in our escaping all those things, but to stand before him, to attend on him as our Master, to stand continually before his throne, and serve him day and night in his temple, Rev. vii. 15. always to behold his face, as the angels, Matt. xviii. 10. The saints are here said to be accounted worthy as before, chap. xx. 35. God, by the good work of his grace in them, makes them meet for this happiness, and by the good will of his grace towards them, accounts them worthy of it: but, as Grotius here saith, a great part of our worthiness lies in an acknowledgment of our own unworthiness. (2.) What should be our *askings* in these aims. *Watch therefore and pray always*. Watching and praying must go together, Neh. iv. 9. Those that would escape the wrath to come, and make sure of the joys to come, must watch and pray, and must do it always, must make it the constant business of their lives. (1.) To keep a guard upon themselves; watch against sin, watch to every duty, and to the improvement of every opportunity of doing good. Be awake, and keep awake, in expectation of your Lord's coming, that you may be in a right frame to receive him and bid him welcome. (2.) To keep up their communion with God, *pray always*; be always in a habitual disposition to that duty; keep up stated times for it, abound in it. Pray upon all occasions. Those shall be accounted worthy to live a life of praise in the other world, that live a life of prayer in this world.

In the two last verses we have an account how Christ disposed of himself during those three or four days betwixt his riding triumph into Jerusalem, and the night in which he was betrayed.

1. He was all day teaching in the temple. Christ preached on week-days as well as sabbath-days. He was an indefatigable preacher, he preached in the face of opposition, and in the midst of those that he knew sought occasion against him.

2. At night he went out to lodge at a friend's house, in the mount of Olives, about a mile out of town. It is likely he had some friends in the city that would gladly have lodged him, but he was willing to retire in the evening out of the noise of the town, that he might have more time for secret devotion, now his hour was at hand.

3. Early in the morning he was in the temple again, where he had a morning lecture for those that were willing to attend it, and the people were forward to hear one that they saw forward to preach, ver. 38. *They all came early in the morning*, flocking to the temple, like doves to their windows, for to hear him, though the chief priests and scribes did all they could to prejudice them against him. Sometimes the taste and relish which serious honest plain people have of good preaching, is more to be valued and judged by, than the opinion of the witty and learned, and those in authority.

C H A P. XXII.

All the evangelists, whatever they omit, give us a particular account of the death and resurrection of Christ, because he died for our sins, and rose for our justification. And this evangelist, as fully as any, and with many circumstances and passages added, which we had not before. In this chapter we have, (1.) The plot to take Jesus, and Judas's coming into it, ver. 1-6. (2.) Christ's eating the passover with his disciples, ver. 7-19. (3.) The instituting of the Lord's supper, ver. 19-20. (4.) Christ's discourse with his disciples after supper, upon several heads, ver. 21-38. (5.) His agony in the garden, ver. 39-46. (6.) The apprehending of him, by the assistance of Judas, ver. 47-53. (7.) Peter's denying him, ver. 54-62. (8.) The indignities done to Christ by those that had him in custody, and his trial and condemnation in the ecclesiastical court, ver. 63-71.

1. NOW the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. 2. And the chief priests and Scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people. 3. ¶ Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. 4. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. 5. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. 6. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.

The year of the redeemed is now come, which had been from eternity fixed in the divine counsels, and long looked for by them that waited for the consolation of Israel, after the revolutions of many ages it is at length come, Isa. lxiii. 4. And it is observable, it is in the very first month of that year that the redemption is wrought out, so much in haste was the Redeemer to perform his undertaking, so was he straitened till it was accomplished. It was in the same month, and at the same time of the month, (in the beginning of months, Exod. xii. 2.) that God by Moses brought Israel out of Egypt, that the antitype might answer the type. Christ is here delivered up, when the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, ver. 1. About as long before that feast as they began to make preparation for it, here was preparation a making for our passover's being offered for us.

1. Here we have his sworn enemies contriving it, ver. 2. The chief priests, men of sanctity, and the Scribes, men of learning, seeking how they might kill him, either by force or fraud; could they have had their will, it had been soon done, but they feared the people, and the more for what they now saw of their diligent attendance upon his preaching.

2. A treacherous disciple joined in with them, and coming to their assistance, Judas surnamed Iscariot, he is here said to be of the number of the twelve, that dignified, distinguished number. One would wonder that Christ, who knew all men, should take a traitor into that number; and that one of that number, who could not but know Christ, should be so base as to betray him; but Christ had wise and holy ends in taking Judas to be a disciple, and how he who knew Christ so well, yet came to betray him, we are here told, ver. 3. Satan entered into Judas. It was the devil's work, who thought thereby to ruin Christ's undertaking, to have broke his head, but it proved only the bruising of his heel. Whoever betrays Christ or his truths, or ways, it is Satan that puts them upon it. Judas knew how desirous the chief priests were to get Christ into their hands, and that they could not do it safely without the assistance of some that knew his retirements as he did: He therefore went himself and made the motion to them, ver. 4. Note, It is hard to say whether more mischief is done to Christ's kingdom by the power and policy of its open enemies, or by the treachery and self-seeking of its pretended friends: Nay, without that its enemies could not gain their point as they do. When you see Judas communing with the chief priests, be sure some mischief is in hatching; it is for no good that they are laying their heads together.

The issue of the treaty between them is, (1.) That Judas must betray Christ to them, must bring them to a place where they might seize him without danger of tumult, and this they would be glad of. (2.) They must give him a sum of money for doing it, and that he would be glad of, ver. 5. They covenanted to give him money. When the bargain was made, Judas sought opportunity to betray him: Probably he slyly enquired of Peter and John, who were more intimate with their Master than he was, where he would be at such a time, and whether he would retire after the passover, and they were not sharp enough to suspect him. Some how or other, in a little time, he gained the advantage he sought, and fixed the time and place where it might be done, in the absence of the multitude, and without tumult.

7. ¶ Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. 8. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. 9. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? 10. And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. 11. And ye shall say unto the good man of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? 12. And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. 13. And they went and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. 14. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. 15. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: 16. For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. 17. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves. 18. For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. 19. ¶ And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave it unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

What a hopeful prospect had we of Christ's doing a great deal of good by his preaching in the temple, during the feast of unleavened bread which continued seven days, when the people were every morning, and early in the morning, so attentive to hear him? But here is a stop put to it: He must enter upon work of another kind, but in that he shall do more good than in the other, for neither Christ's nor his church's suffering days are their idle empty days.

Now here we have,

1. The preparation that was made for Christ's eating the passover with his disciples, upon the very day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed, according to law, ver. 7. Christ was made under the law, and observed the ordinances of it, and particularly that of the passover, to teach us in like manner to observe his gospel institutions, particularly that of the Lord's supper, and not to neglect them. It is probable he went to the temple to preach in the morning, when he sent Peter and John another way into the city to prepare the passover. Those who have attendants about them, to do their secular business for them in a great measure, must not think that that allows them to be idle, but it engageth them to employ themselves more in spiritual business or service to the public. He directed those whom he employed whither they should go, ver. 9, 10. They must follow a man bearing a pitcher of water, and he must be their guide to the house. Christ could have described the house to them, probably it was a house they knew, and he might have said no more, but go to such a one's house, or to a house in such a street, with such a sign, &c. But he directed them thus, to teach them to depend upon the conduct of providence, and to follow that step by step. They went, not knowing whither they went, but whom they followed. Being come to the house, they must desire the master of the house to shew them a room, ver. 11. and he will readily do it, ver. 12. Whether it was a friend's house or a public house it doth not appear; but the disciples found their guide, and the house and the room just as he had said to them, ver. 13. for they need not fear a disappointment who go upon Christ's word; and according to the orders given them they got every thing in readiness for the passover, ver. 11.

2. The solemnizing of the passover according to the law. When the hour was come, that they should go to supper, he sat down, it is likely at the head end of the table, and the twelve apostles with him, Judas not excepted; for it is possible that they whose hearts are filled with Satan, and all manner of wickedness, may yet continue a plausible profession of religion, and be found in the performance of its external services. And while it is in the heart, and doth not break out into any thing scandalous, such cannot be denied the external privileges of their external profession. Though Judas had already been guilty of an over-act of treason, yet it not being publicly known, Christ admits him to sit down with the rest at the passover. Now observe,

(1.) How Christ bids this passover welcome, to teach us in like manner to welcome his passover, the Lord's supper, and to come to it with an appetite ver. 15. With desire I have desired, I have most earnestly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer. He knew it was to be the prologue to his sufferings, and therefore he desired it, because it was in order to his Father's glory and man's redemption. He delighted to do even this part of the will of God, concerning him as Mediator. Shall we be backward to any service for him who was so forward in the work of our salvation? See the love he had to his disciples, he desired to eat with them, that he and they might have a little time together; themselves, and none but they, for private conversation, which they could not have in Jerusalem, but upon this occasion. He was now about to leave them, but was very desirous to eat this passover with them before he suffered, as if the comfort of that would carry him the more cheerfully through his sufferings, and make them the easier to him. Note, our gospel-passover eaten by faith with Jesus Christ, will be an excellent preparation for sufferings and trials and death itself.

(2.) How Christ in it takes his leave of all passovers, thereby signifying his abrogating of all the ordinances of the ceremonial law, of which that of the passover was one of the earliest and one of the most eminent, ver. 16. I will not eat any more thereof, nor shall it be any more celebrated by my disciples, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. (1.) It was fulfilled when Christ our passover was sacrificed for us, 1. Cor. v. 7. And therefore that type and shadow was laid aside, because now in the kingdom of God the substance was come, which superseded them. (2.) It was fulfilled in the Lord's supper; an ordinance of the gospel-kingdom, in which the passover had its accomplishment, and which the disciples after the pouring out of the Spirit did frequently celebrate, as we find, Acts ii. 42, 46. They eat of it, and Christ might be said to eat with them because of the spiritual communion they had with him in that ordinance: He is said to sup with them, and they with him, Rev. iii. 20. But, (3.) The complete accomplishment of that commemoration of liberty will be in the kingdom of glory; when all God's spiritual Israel shall be released from the bondage of death and sin, and be put in possession of the land of promise.

What he had said of his eating of the Paschal lamb, he repeats concerning his drinking of the passover wine; the cup of blessing, or of thanksgiving in which all the company pledged the Master of the feast at the close of the passover-supper. This cup he took according to the custom, and gave thanks for the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, and the preservation of their first-born, and then said, Take this and divide it among yourselves, ver. 17. This is not said afterwards of the sacramental cup, probably that being of much more weight and value, being the New Testament in his blood, he might give that into every one's hand, to teach them to make a particular application of it to their own souls: but as for the paschal cup which is to be abolished, it is enough to say, Take it and divide it among yourselves, do what you will with it, for we shall have no more occasion for it, ver. 18. I will not drink of the fruit of the vine any more; I will not have it any more drunk of, till the kingdom of God shall come, till the Spirit be poured out, and then you shall in the Lord's supper commemorate a much more glorious redemption; of which both the deliverance out of Egypt and the passover commemoration of it were types and figures. The kingdom of God is now so near being set up, that you will not need to eat or drink any more till it comes; Christ dying next day opened it. As Christ with a great deal of pleasure took leave of all the legal feasts, (which fell of course with the passover) for the evangelical ones, both spiritual and sacramental: so may good Christians, when they are called to remove from the church militant to that which is triumphant, cheerfully exchange even their spiritual repast, much more their sacramental ones, for the eternal feast.

3. The institution of the Lord's supper, ver. 19, 20. The passover, and the deliverance out of Egypt, were typical and prophetic signs, of a Christ to come, that should by dying deliver us from sin and death, and the tyranny of Satan; but they shall no more say, The Lord liveth that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, a much greater deliverance shall eclipse the lustre of that, and therefore the Lord's supper is instituted to be a commemorative sign or memorial of a Christ already come, that has by dying delivered us; and it is his death that is in a special manner set before us in that ordinance.

5. The breaking of Christ's body as a sacrifice for us, is here commemorated by the breaking of bread; and the sacrifices under the law, were called the bread of our God, Lev. xvi. 6, 8, 17. This is my body which is given for you: And there is a feast upon that sacrifice instituted, in which we are to apply it to ourselves, and to take the benefit and comfort of it; this bread that was given for us, is given to us to be food to our souls, for nothing can be more nourishing and satisfying to our souls than the doctrine of Christ's making atonement for sin, and the assurance of our interest in that atone-

ment; this bread that was broken and given for us, to satisfy for the guilt of our sins, is broken and given to us, to satisfy the desire of our souls. And this we do in remembrance of what he did for us, when he died for us, and for a memorial of what we do in making ourselves partakers of him, and joining ourselves to him in an everlasting covenant: like the stone Joshua set up for a witness, Josh. xxiv. 27.

2. The shedding of Christ's blood, by which the atonement was made (for the blood made atonement for the soul, Lev. xvii. 11.) as represented by the wine in the cup, and that cup of wine is a sign and token of the New Testament or new covenant made with us. It commemorates the purchase of the covenant by the blood of Christ, and confirms the promises of the covenant, which are all Yea and Amen in him. This will be reviving and refreshing to our souls, as wine that makes glad the heart. In all our commemorations of the shedding of Christ's blood, we must have an eye to it as shed for us; we needed it, we take hold of it, we hope to have benefit by it, who loved me, and gave himself for me. And in all our regards to the New Testament, we must have an eye to the blood of Christ, which gave life and being to it, and seals to us all the promises of it. Had it not been for the blood of Christ, we had never had the New Testament; and had it not been for the New Testament, we had never known the meaning of Christ's blood shed.

21. ¶ But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me, is with me on the table. 22. And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed. 23. And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing. 24. ¶ And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. 25. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them: and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. 26. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. 27. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth. 28. Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. 29. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; 30. That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 31. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 32. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy bretheren. 33. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death. 34. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me. 35. And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? and they said, Nothing. 36. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. 37. For I say unto you, That this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors; for the things concerning me have an end. 38. And they said, Lord, behold here are two swords. And he said unto them it is enough.

We have here Christ's discourse with his disciples after supper, much of which is new here; and in St. John's Gospel we shall find more that is new still. We should take example from him, to entertain and edify our family and friends with such discourse at table, as is good, and to the use of edifying, which may minister grace to the hearers; but especially after we have been at the Lord's table, by Christian conference to keep one another in a suitable frame. The matters Christ here discoursed of were of weight and to the present purpose.

First, He discoursed with them concerning him that should betray him, who was now present.

1. He signifies to them that the traitor was now among them, and one of them, ver. 21. By the placing of this after the institution of the Lord's supper, which in Matthew and Mark is placed before it, it seems plain that Judas did receive the Lord's supper, did eat of that bread, and drink of that cup, for after the solemnity was over, Christ said, Behold the hand of him that betrayeth me, is with me on the table. There have been those that have eaten bread with Christ and yet have betrayed him.

2. He foretells that the treason would take effect, ver. 22. Truly the Son of man goes as it was determined; goes to the place where he will be betrayed; for he is delivered up by the counsel and foreknowledge of God, else Judas could not have delivered him up. Christ was not driven to his sufferings, but cheerfully went to them. He said, Lo, I come.

3. He threatens the traitor, Woe to that man by whom he is betrayed. Note. Neither the patience of the saints under their sufferings, nor the counsel of God concerning their sufferings, will be any excuse for those that have any hand in their sufferings, or that persecute them. Though God has determined, that Christ shall be betrayed, and he himself has cheerfully submitted to it, yet Judas's sin or punishment is not at all the less.

4. He frightens the rest of the disciples into a suspicion of themselves, by saying it was one of them, and not naming which; ver. 23. They began to enquire among themselves, to interrogate themselves, to put the question to themselves, who it was that should do this thing, that could be so base to so good a master. The inquiry was not, Is it you? or is it such a one; but, Is it I?

Secondly, Concerning the strife that was among them for precedency or supremacy.

1. See what the dispute was; which of them should be accounted the greatest? Such

Such and so many contests we find among the disciples for dignity and dominion before the Spirit was poured upon them, was a sad preface of the like strifes for, and affectations of supremacy in the churches, after the Spirit should be provoked to depart from them. How inconsistent is this with that in the verse before: There they were inquiring which would be the traitor, and here which should be the prince. Could such an instance of humility, and such an instance of pride and vanity, be found in the same men so near together? This is like *sweet waters* and *bitter*, proceeding at the same place out of the same fountain: What a self-contradiction is the deceitful heart of man!

2. See what Christ said to this dispute: He was not sharp upon them, as might have been expected, he having so often reproved them for this very thing, but mildly shewed them the sin and folly of it.

1. This was to make themselves like the *kings of the Gentiles*, that affect worldly pomp, and with worldly power, *ver. 25*. They exercise lordship over their subjects, and are ever and anon striving to exercise lordship too over the princes that are about them, though as good as themselves, if they think them not so strong as themselves. Note, The exercising of lordship better becomes the *kings of the Gentiles* than the ministers of Christ. But observe, They that exercise authority, and take upon themselves to bear sway and give law, they are called *benefactors*, *ἑταῖροι*, they call themselves so, and so their flatterers call them, and those that set themselves to serve their interests. It is pretended, that they have been benefactors, and upon that account they should be admitted to have rule; nay, that in exercising authority they are benefactors; however they really serve themselves, they would be thought to serve their country. One of the Ptolemys was surnamed Euergetes the benefactor. Now our Saviour, by taking notice of this, intimates, (1.) That to do good is much more honourable than to look great; for these princes that were the terror of the mighty, yet would not be called so, but rather the benefactors of the needy; so that by their own confession a benefactor to his country is much more valued than a ruler of his country. (2.) That to do good is the surest way to be great, else they that aimed to be rulers, would not have been so solicitous to be called benefactors: this therefore he would have his disciples believe, that their greatest honour would be to do all the good they could in the world. They would indeed be benefactors to the world, by bringing the gospel to it. Let them value themselves upon that title, which they would indeed be intitled to, and then they need not strive which should be the greatest, for they would all be greater; greater blessings to mankind than the kings of the earth, that exercise lordship over them. If they have that which is confessedly the greater honour of being benefactors, let them despise the lesser of being rulers.

2. It was to make themselves unlike the disciples of Christ, and unlike Christ himself, *ver. 26, 27*. Ye shall not be so. It was never intended that you should rule any otherwise than by the power of truth and grace, but that you should serve. When church-rulers affect external pomp and power, and bear up themselves by secular interests and influences, they debase their office, and it is an instance of degeneracy like that of Israel when they would have a king like the nations that were round about them, whereas the Lord was their King.

See here, (1.) What is the rule Christ gave to his disciples. He that is greater among you, that is senior, to whom precedence is due upon the account of his age, let him be as the younger, both in point of *looseness of place*, let him condescend to sit with the younger, and be free and familiar with them; and in point of *labour and work*. We used to say, *Juniores ad labores, seniores ad honores*; but let the elder take pains as well as the younger; their age and honour, instead of warranting them to take their ease, binds them to double work. And he that is chief, the *ὁ πρῶτος*, the president of the college of assembly, let him be as he that doth serve, *ὡς ὁ διακονῶν* as the deacon, let him stoop to the meanest and most toilsome services for the public good, if there be occasion.

(2.) What was the example which he himself gave to this rule, *Whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth?* He that attendeth, or he that is attended on? Now Christ was among his disciples, just like one that waited at table; he was so far from taking state, or taking his ease by commanding their attendance upon him, that he was ready to do any office of kindness and service for them; witness his washing their feet. Shall they take upon them the form of princes, who call themselves followers of him that took upon him the form of a servant?

3. They ought not to strive for worldly honour and grandeur, because he had better honours in reserve for them of another nature, a kingdom, a feast, a throne, for each of them, wherein they should be all share and share alike, and should have no occasion to strive for precedence, *ver. 28, 29, 30*. Where observe,

1. The commendation Christ gives of the disciples for their faithfulness to him, and this was honour enough for them, they needed not to strive for any greater. It is spoken with an air of encomium and applause, *Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations*, you are they which have stood by me, and stuck to me, when others have deserted me, and turned their backs upon me. Christ had his temptations, he was despised and rejected of men, reproached and reviled, and endured the contradiction of sinners. But his disciples continued with him, and were afflicted in all his afflictions. It was but little help that they could give him, or service that they could do him; but however, he took it kindly that they continued with him, and here he owns their kindness, though it was by the assistance of his own grace that they did continue. Christ's disciples had been very defective in their duty, we find them guilty of many mistakes and weaknesses, they were very dull and very forgetful, and often blundered, yet their Master has passed all by and forgotten it, doth not upbraid them with their infirmities, but gives them this memorable testimonial, *Ye are they which have continued with me*. Thus doth he praise at parting, to shew how willing he is to make the best of those whose hearts he knows to be upright with him.

2. The recompense he designed them for their fidelity. And I appoint *διατίθωμι*, I bequeath unto you a kingdom. Or thus, I appoint to you, as my Father has appointed a kingdom to me, that you may eat and drink at my table. Understand it,

1. Of what should be done for them in this world. God gave his Son a kingdom among men, the gospel church, which he is the living, quickening, ruling head of this kingdom he appointed to his apostles and their successors in the ministry of the gospel, that they should enjoy the comforts and privileges of the gospel, and help to communicate them to others by gospel-ordinances; and should sit on thrones as officers of the church, not only declaratively, but as exhortatively judging the tribes of Israel, that persist in their infidelity, and denouncing the wrath of God against them; and ruling the gospel Israel, the spiritual Israel, by the instituted discipline of the church administered with gentleness and love. This is the honour reserved for you. Or,

2. Of what should be done for them in the other world; which I take to be chiefly meant. Let them go on in their services in this world, their preferments shall be in the other world. God will give them the kingdom,

in which they shall be sure to have, (1.) The richest dainties, for they shall eat and drink at Christ's table in his kingdom, of which he has spoken, *ver. 16—18*. They shall partake of those joys and pleasures which were the recompense of his services and sufferings. They shall have a full satisfaction of soul, in the vision and fruition of God; and herein they shall have the best society, as at a feast in the perfection of love. (2.) The highest dignities. You shall not only be provided for at the royal table, as Menemboeth at David's, but you shall be preferred to the royal throne; shall sit down with me on my throne, *Rev. iii. 21*. In the great day you shall sit on thrones, as assessors with Christ, to approve of and applaud his judgment of the twelve tribes of Israel. If the saints shall judge the world, *1 Cor. vi. 2*, much more the church.

Thirdly, Concerning Peter's denying of him. And in this part of the discourse we may observe,

1. The general notice Christ gives to Peter of the devil's design upon him and the rest of the apostles, *ver. 31*. The Lord said, Simon, Simon, observe what I say, Satan has desired to have you, to have you all in his hands, that he may sift you as wheat. Peter, that used to be the mouth of the rest in speaking to Christ, is here made the ear of the rest, and what is designed for warning to them all, *All you shall be offended because of me*, is directed to Peter, because he was principally concerned, being in a particular manner struck at by the tempter. Satan has desired to have you. Probably Satan had accused the disciples to God, as mercenary in following Christ, and aiming at nothing else therein but enriching and advancing themselves in this world, as he accused Job: No, saith God, they are honest men, and men of integrity; give me leave to try them, saith Satan, and Peter particularly. He desired to have them, that he might sift them, that he might shew them to be chaff and not wheat. The troubles that were now coming upon them were sifting, would try what there was in them; but that was not all, Satan desired to sift them by his temptations, and endeavouring by those troubles to draw them into sin; to put them into a loss and hurry, as corn when it is sifted to bring the chaff uppermost, or rather to shake out the wheat and leave nothing but the chaff. Observe, Satan could not sift them unless God gave him leave; he desired to have them, as he begged of God a permission to try and tempt Job, *ἰκίνησθε*, He hath challenged you, has undertaken to prove you a company of hypocrites, and Peter especially, the forwardest of you. Some suggest that Satan demanded leave to sift them, as their punishment for striving who should be greatest, in which contest Peter perhaps was very warm. Leave them to me to sift them for it.

2. The particular encouragement he gave to Peter in reference to this trial. I have prayed for thee, because though he desired to have them all, he was permitted to make his strongest onset upon three only; thou wilt be most violently assaulted, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, that it may not totally and finally fail. Note, (1.) If faith be kept up in an hour of temptation, though we may fall, yet we shall not be utterly cast down. Faith will quench Satan's fiery darts. (2.) Though there may be many failings in the faith of true believers, yet there shall not be a total and final failure of their faith. It is their feed, their root remaining in them. (3.) It is owing to the mediation and intercession of Jesus Christ that the faith of his disciples, though sometimes sadly shaken, yet is not sunk. If they were left to themselves they would fail, but they are kept by the power of God, and the prayer of Christ. The intercession of Christ is not only general, for all that believe, but for particular believers, I have prayed for thee, which is an encouragement for us to pray for ourselves, and an engagement upon us to pray for others too.

3. The charge he gives to Peter to help others as he should himself be helped of God, *When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren*; when thou art recovered by the grace of God, and brought to repentance, do what thou canst to recover others; when thou hast found thy faith kept from failing, labour to confirm their faith by others, and to establish them. When thou hast found mercy with God thyself, encourage others to hope that they also shall find mercy. Note, 1. Those that are fallen into sin must be converted from it; that have turned aside must return; that have left their first love must do their first works. 2. Those that through grace are converted from sin must do what they can to strengthen their brethren that stand, and to prevent their falling, see *Psal. li. 11, 12, 13*. *1 Tim. i. 13*.

4. Peter's declared resolution to cleave to Christ, whatever it cost him, *ver. 33*. Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death. This was a great word, and yet I believe no more than he thought at this time, and thought he should make good too. Judas never protested thus against denying Christ, though often warned of it: for his heart was as fully set in him to the evil as Peter's was against it. Note, All the true disciples of Christ sincerely desire and design to follow him whithersoever he goes, and whithersoever he leads them, though into a prison, though out of the world.

5. Christ's express prediction of his denying him thrice, *ver. 34*. I tell thee, Peter, thou dost not know thine own heart, but must be left to thyself a little that thou mayest know it, and mayest never trust to it again, and then the cock shall not crow this day, before thou even deny that thou knowest me. Note, Christ knows us better than we know ourselves, and knows the evil that is in us and will be done by us, which we ourselves do not suspect. It is well for us that Christ knows where we are weak better than we do, and therefore where to come in with grace sufficient; that he knows how far a temptation will prevail, and therefore when to say, *Hitherto shall it come and no further*.

Fourthly, Concerning the condition of all the disciples.

1. He appeals to them concerning what had been, *ver. 35*. He had owned that they had been faithful servants to him, *ver. 28*. Now he expects at parting that they should acknowledge that he has been a kind and careful master to them ever since they left all to follow him. When I sent you without purse, lacked you any thing? (1.) He owns that he had sent them out in a very poor and bare condition, bare-foot, and no money in their purses, because they were not to go far, nor be out long, and he would thus teach them to depend upon the providence of God, and, under that, upon the kindness of their friends. If God thus send us out into the world, remember, better than we have thus begun low. (2.) Yet he will have them own, that notwithstanding this they had lacked nothing; they then lived as plentifully and comfortably as ever; and they readily acknowledged it, nothing, Lord, I have all, and abound. Note, 1. It is good for us often to review the providences of God that have been concerning us all our days, and to observe how we have got through the straits and difficulties we have met with. 2. Christ is a good master, and his service a good service, for though his servants may sometimes be brought low, yet he will help them; and though he try them, yet will not he leave them. *Solomon jirch*. 3. We must reckon ourselves well done by, and must not complain, but be thankful if we have had the necessary supports of life, though we have had neither dainties nor superfluities, though we have lived from hand to mouth, and lived upon the kindness of our friends. The disciples lived upon contributions, and yet did not complain that their maintenance was precarious, but owned to their Master's honour that it was sufficient they had wanted nothing.

2. He gives them notice of a very great change of their circumstances now approaching. For,

1. He that was their master was now entering upon his suffering, which he had often foretold, *ver. 37.* Now *that which is written must be fulfilled in me*, that among the rest, *He was numbered among the transgressors*; he must suffer and die as a malefactor, and in company with some of the vilest of malefactors. This is that which is *yet to be accomplished*, after all the rest, and then *the things concerning me*, the things written concerning me, will have an end; then I shall say, *It is finished.* Note. It may be the comfort of suffering Christians, as it was of a suffering Christ, that their sufferings were foretold and determined in the counsels of heaven, and will shortly determine in the joys of heaven. They were *written* concerning them, and they *will have an end*, and will end well, everlastingly well.

2. They must therefore expect troubles, and must not think how to have such an easy fair life as you have had, no, the scene will alter. They must now in some degree *suffer with their Master*, and when he is gone they must expect to suffer *like him*. The servant is not better than his lord. (1.) They must not now expect that their friends would be so kind and generous to them as they had been, and therefore *he that has a purse let him take it*, for he may have occasion for it, and for all the good husbandry he can use. (2.) They must now expect that their enemies would be more fierce upon them than they had been, and they would need magazines as well as stores. *He that has no sword* wherewith to defend himself against robbers and assassins, (2 Cor. xi. 26.) will find a great want of it, and will be ready to wish, some time or other, that he had sold his garment and bought one. This is intended only to shew that the times would be very perilous, so that no man would think himself safe if he had not a sword by his side. But the *sword of the Spirit* is the sword which the disciples of Christ must furnish themselves with, *Christ having suffered for us*, we must *arm ourselves* with the same mind, 1 Pet. iv. 1. arm ourselves with an expectation of trouble, that it may not be a surprise to us, and with a holy resignation to the will of God in it, that there may be no contradiction in us to it. And then we are better prepared than if we had sold a coat to buy a sword. The disciples hereupon inquire what strength they had, and find they had among them *two swords*, *ver. 38.* of which one was Peter's. The Galileans generally travelled with swords. Christ wore none himself, but he was not against his disciples wearing them. But how little he would have them depend upon that, he intimates when he saith, *it is enough.* Which some think is spoken ironically. Two swords among twelve men; you are bravely armed indeed, when our enemies are now coming out against us in great multitudes, and every one a sword: yet two swords are enow to those who need none, having God himself to be *the shield of their help and the sword of their excellency*, Deut. xxxii. 29.

39. ¶ And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. 40. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray, that ye enter not into temptation. 41. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, 42. Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. 43. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. 44. And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. 45. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow. 46. And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

We have here an awful story of Christ's *agony in the garden*, just before he was betrayed, which was largely related by the other evangelists. In it Christ *accommodated himself* to that part of his undertaking which he was now entering upon, the making of his *soul an offering for sin*: He afflicted his own soul with grief for the sin he was to satisfy for, and an apprehension of the wrath of God to which man had by sin made himself obnoxious, which he was pleased as a sacrifice to admit the impressions of, the consuming of a sacrifice with fire from heaven, being the surest tokens of its acceptance. In it Christ entered the lists with the powers of darkness, gave them all the advantages they could desire, and yet conquered them.

That which we have here in this story, which we had before, is, (1.) That when Christ went out, though it was in the night, and a long walk, yet his *disciples followed him*, eleven of them, for Judas had given them the slip. Having continued with him hitherto in his temptations, they would not leave him now. (2.) That he went to the place where he was wont to be private, which intimates that Christ accustomed himself to retirement, was often alone to teach us to be so, for freedom of converse with God and our own hearts. Though Christ had no convenience for retirement but a garden, yet he retired. This should particularly be our practice after we have been at the Lord's table; we have then work to do which requires us to be private. (3.) That he exhorted his disciples to *pray*, that though the approaching trial could not be avoided, yet that they might not in it *enter into temptation* to sin; that when they were in the greatest fright and danger, yet they might not have any inclination to desert Christ, nor take a step toward it. Pray that ye may be *kept from sin*. (4.) That he withdrew from them and prayed himself; they had their errands at the throne of grace, and he had his, and therefore it was fit they should pray separately, as sometimes when they had joint errands they prayed together. He withdrew about a *stone's cast* further into the garden, which some reckon about fifty or sixty paces, and there he *kneeled down*, so it is here, upon the bare ground; but the other evangelists say, that afterwards he *fell on his face*, and there *prayed*, that if it were the will of God this cup of suffering, this bitter cup, might be *removed from him*. This was the language of that innocent dread of suffering, which being really and truly man he could not but have in his nature. (5.) That he knowing it to be his Father's will that he should suffer and die, and that as the matter was now settled it was necessary for our redemption and salvation, presently withdrew that petition, did not insist upon it, but resigned himself to his heavenly Father's will: *Nevertheless, not my will be done; not the will of my human nature, but the will of God* as it is written concerning me in the volume of the book, which I delight to do, let that be done, 1 Psalm xl. 7. 8. (6.) That his disciples were *asleep* when he was at prayer, and when they should have been themselves praying, *ver. 45.* When he rose from prayer he found them *sleeping*, unconcerned in his sorrows; but see what a favourable construction is here put upon it, which we had not in the other evangelists, they were *sleeping for sorrow*. The great sorrow they were in upon the mournful fare-

wells their Master had been, this evening giving them, had exhausted their spirits, and made them very dull and heavy, which (it being now late) disposed them to sleep. This teaches us to make the best of our brethren's infirmities, and if there be one cause better than another, charitably impute them to that. (7.) That when he waked them then he exhorted them to pray, *ver. 46.* *Why sleep ye?* Why do you allow yourselves to sleep, *rise and pray.* Shake off your drowsiness, that you may be *fit to pray*, and pray for grace, that you may be able to *shake off your drowsiness*. This was like the ship-master's call to Jonah in a storm, *Jonah i. 6.* *Arise, call upon thy God.* When we find ourselves either by our outward circumstances or our inward dispositions entering into temptation, it concerns us to *rise and pray*, Lord, help me in this time of need.

But here are three things in this passage which we had not in the other evangelists.

1. That when Christ was in his agony, there appeared to him an angel from heaven strengthening him, *ver. 43.* (1.) It was an instance of the deep humiliation of our Lord Jesus, that he needed the assistance of an angel, and would admit it. The influence of the divine nature withdrew for the present, and then as to his human nature he was for a little while *lower than the angels*, and was capable of receiving help from them. (2.) When he was not delivered from his sufferings, yet he was *strengthened* and supported under them, and that was equivalent. If God proportion the shoulders to the burden, we shall have no reason to complain, whatever he is pleased to lay upon us. David owns this a sufficient answer to his prayer, in the day of trouble, that God strengthened him with strength in his soul; and so doth the sons of David, *Psalms cxxxviii. 3.* (3.) The angels ministered to the Lord Jesus in his sufferings: He could have had legions of them to relieve him; nay, this one could have done it, could have chased and conquered the whole band of men that came to take him: but he made use of his ministration only to *strengthen him*; and the very visit which this angel made him now in his grief, when his enemies were awake and his friends asleep, was such a seasonable token of the divine favour, as would be a very great strengthening to him. Yet this was not all: he probably *said something to him to strengthen him*; put him in mind that his sufferings were in order to his Father's glory, to his own glory, and to the salvation of those that were given him, represented to him *the joy set before him*, the *seed he should see*; with these and the like suggestions he encouraged him to go on cheerfully, and what is comforting is strengthening. Perhaps he *did something to strengthen him*, wiped away his sweat and tears, perhaps ministered some cordial to him, as after his temptation, or it may be took him by the arm and helped him off the ground, or bore him up when he was ready to faint away; and in these services of the angel, the holy Spirit was *imparting strength*, putting strength into him, for so the word signifies. It pleased the Lord to *strengthen him* indeed, yet did he plead against him with his great power? no, but he put strength in him, *Job xxxiii. 6.* as he had promised, *Psalms lxxix. 21.* *Isa. xlix. 8.*—1. 7.

2. That being in an agony he prayed more earnestly, *ver. 44.* As his sorrow and trouble grew upon him, he grew more importunate in prayer; not that there was before any coldness or indifference in his prayers, but there was now a greater vehemency in them, which was expressed in his voice and gesture. Note, Prayer, though never out of season, is in a special manner seasonable when we are in agony; and the stronger our agonies are, the more lively and frequent our prayers should be. Now it was that Christ offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, and was heard in that he feared, *Heb. v. 7.* and in his fear *wrestled*, as Jacob with the angel.

3. That in this agony, his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Sweat came in with sin, and was a branch of the curse, *Gen. iii. 19.* And therefore when Christ was made sin and a curse for us, he underwent a grievous sweat, that in the sweat of his face we might eat bread, and that he might sanctify and sweeten all our trials to us. It is some dispute among the critics, whether this sweat is only compared to drops of blood, being much thicker than drops of sweat commonly are, the pores of the body being more than ordinarily opened: Or, that real blood out of the capillary veins mingled with it, so that it was in colour like blood, and might truly be called a *bloody sweat*; the matter is not great. Some reckon this one of the times when Christ shed his blood for us, for without shedding of blood no remission. Every pore was as it were a bleeding wound, and his blood stained all his raiment. This shewed the travail of his soul. He was now abroad in the open air, in a cool season, upon the cold ground, farin the night, which one would think, had been enough to strike in a sweat; yet now he breaks out into a sweat, which speaks the extremity of agony he was in.

47. ¶ And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. 48. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? 49. When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we finite with the sword? 50. ¶ And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. 51. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him. 52. Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders which were come to him, Be ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves? 53. When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

Satan finding himself baffled in his attempt to terrify our Lord Jesus, and so to put him out of the possession of his own soul, betakes himself (according to his usual method) to force and arms, and brings a party into the field to seize him, and Satan was in them: Here is,

1. The marking of him by Judas. Here is a numerous party appears, and Judas at the head of them, for he was *guide to them that took Jesus*; they knew not where to find him, but he brought them to the place: when they were there they knew not which was he; but Judas told them, that whoever he should kiss, the same was he; so he drew near him to kiss him, according to the wonted freedom and familiarity which our Lord Jesus admitted his disciples to. Luke takes notice of the question Christ asked him, which we have not in the other evangelists, *Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?* What, is that the signal? *ver. 48.* Must the Son of man be betrayed, as if any thing could be concealed from him, and a plot carried on

on against him unknown to him? Must one of his own disciples betray him, as if he had been a hard master to them, or deserved ill at their hands? Must he be betrayed by a kiss? Must the badge of friendship be the instrument of treachery? Was ever a love-token so desecrated and abused? Note, Nothing can be a greater affront or grief to the Lord Jesus than to be betrayed, and betrayed with a kiss, by those that profess relation to him, and an affection for him. Those do so who, under pretence of zeal for his honour, prosecute his servants, who, under the cloak of a seeming affection for the holiness of free grace, give a blow to the root of holiness and strictness of conversation. Many instances there are of Christ's being betrayed with a kiss, by those who under the form of godliness fight against the power of it. It were well if their own consciences would put this question to them which Christ here puts to Judas, *Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?* And will he not repent it? Will he not revenge it?

2. The effort which his disciples made for his protection, *ver. 49. When they saw what would follow, that those armed men were come to seize him, they said, Lord shall we smite with the sword?* Thou didst allow us to have two swords, shall we now make use of them? Never more occasion; and to what purpose should we have them if we do not use them? They asked the question, as if they would not have drawn the sword without commission from their Master, but they were in too much *haste* and too much *heat*, to stay for an answer; But Peter aiming at the head of one of the servants of the high priest, missed his blow, and cut off his right ear. As Christ, by throwing them to the ground that came to take him, shewed what he could have done, so Peter by this exploit shewed what he could have done too, in so good a cause if he had had leave. The other evangelists tell us what was the check Christ gave to Peter for it. Luke here tells us, (1.) How Christ excused the blow, *Suffer ye thus far, ver. 51.* Dr. Whitby thinks he said this to his enemies who came to take him, to qualify them that they might not be provoked by it to fall upon the disciples, whom he had undertaken the preservation of. *Pass by this injury and affront, it was without warrant from me, and there shall not be another blow struck.* Though Christ had power to have struck them down and struck them dead, yet he *speaks them fair*, and, as it were, *begs their pardon* for an assault made upon them by one of his followers, to teach us to give good words even to our enemies. (2.) How he cured the wound, which was more than amends sufficient for the injury; *He touched his ear, and healed him; fastened his ear on again, that he might not so much as go away stigmatized*, though he well deserved it. Christ hereby gave them a proof, (1.) Of his power: He that could heal could destroy if he pleased, which should have obliged them in interest to submit to him. Had they returned the blow upon Peter, he would immediately have healed him; and what could not a small regiment do, that had such a surgeon to it, immediately to help the sick and wounded? (2.) Of his mercy and goodness. Christ here gave an illustrious example to his own rule of doing good to them that hate us, as afterwards he did of praying for them that despitefully use us. Those who render good for evil do as Christ did. One would have thought this generous piece of kindness should have overcome them, that such coals heaped on their heads should have melted them, that they could not have bound him as a malefactor, who had approved himself such a benefactor; but their hearts were hardened.

3. Christ's expostulation with the officers of the detachment that came to apprehend him, to shew what an absurd thing it was for them to make all this rout and noise, *ver. 52, 53.* Matthew relates it, as said to the multitude; Luke tells us it was said to the chief priests and captains of the temple, who commanded the several orders of the priests, and therefore are here put between the chief priests and the elders, so that they were all ecclesiastics, retainers to the temple, who were employed in this odious piece of service, and some of the first rank too disparaged themselves so far as to be seen in it.

Now see here,

1. How Christ reasons with them concerning their proceedings; What needed they come out in the dead of the night, and with swords and slaves. (1.) They knew that he was one that would not resist, or raise the mob against them, he never had done any thing like that; Why then are ye come out as against a thief?

(2.) They knew he was one that would not abscond, for he was daily with them in the temple, in the midst of them, and never sought to conceal himself, nor did they offer to lay hands on him. Before his hour was come, it was folly for them to think to take him, and when his hour was come, it was folly for them to make all this ado to take him.

2. How he reconciles himself to their proceedings; and this we had not before. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness. How hard soever it may seem that I should be thus exposed, I submit, for so it is determined; this is the hour allowed you to have your will against me, there is an hour appointed me to reckon for it. Now the power of darkness, Satan, ruler of the darkness of this world is permitted to do his worst, to bruise the heel of the seed of the woman, and I resolve to acquiesce; let him do his worst. The Lord shall laugh at him, for he sees that his day, his hour, is coming, *Psal. xxxvii. 13.* Let this quiet us under the prevalency of the church's enemies, let it quiet us in a dying hour, that, (1.) It is but an hour that is permitted for the triumph of our adversary, a short time, a limited time. (2.) It is their hour which is appointed them, and in which they are permitted to try their strength, that omnipotence may be the more glorified in their fall. (3.) It is the power of darkness that rides master, and darkness must give way to light, and the power of darkness be made to truckle to the prince of light. Christ was willing to wait for his triumphs till his warfare was accomplished, and we must be so too.

54 ¶ Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off. 55. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. 56. But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man also was with him. 57. And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. 58. And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. 59. And about the space of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, saying, of a truth this fellow also was with them: for he is a Galilean. 60. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately while he yet spake, the cock crew, 61. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice. 62. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

We have here the melancholy story of Peter's denying his Master, at the time when he was arraigned before the high priest, with those that were of the cabal, that were ready to receive the prey, and to prepare the evidence for his arraignment, as soon as it was day, before the great Sanhedrim, *ver. 66.* But notice is not taken here, as was in the other evangelists, of Christ's being now upon his examination before the high priest, only of his being brought into the high priest's house, *ver. 54.* But the manner of expression is observable, they took him, and led him, and brought him, which methinks is like that concerning Saul, *1. Sam. xv. 19. He is gone about, and passed on, and gone down;* and intimates, that even when they had seized their prey they were in confusion, and for fear of the people, or rather struck with inward terror upon what they had seen and heard, they took him the farthest way about, or rather knew not which way they hurried him, such a hurry were they in in their own bosoms. Now observe,

1. Peter's falling, (1.) It began in sneaking. He followed Christ when he was had away a prisoner, that was well, and shewed a concern for his Master; but he followed him afar off, that he might be out of danger. He thought to trim the matter; to follow Christ, and so to satisfy his conscience, but to follow afar off, and so to save his reputation and sleep in a whole skin. (2.) It proceeded in keeping his distance still, and associating himself with the high priest's servants, when he should have been at his Master's elbow. The servants kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and sat down together, to talk over their night's expedition. Probably, Malchus was among them, and Peter sat down among them, as if he had been one of them, at least would be thought to be so. (3.) His fall itself was disclaiming all acquaintance with Christ and relation to him, disowning him because he was now in distress and danger. He was charged by a sorry simple maid that belonged to the house, with being a retainer to this Jesus, about whom there was now so much noise; she looked wistly upon him as he sat by the fire, only because he was a stranger, and one whom she had not seen before, and concluding that at this time of night there were no neutrals there, and knowing him not to be any of the retinue of the high priest, she concludes him to be one of the retinue of this Jesus, or perhaps she had been some time or other looking about her in the temple, and had seen Jesus there and Peter with him, officious about him, and remembered him; and this man was with him, said she. And Peter, as he had not the courage to own the charge, so he had not the wit and presence of mind to turn it off, as he might have done many ways, and therefore flat and plain denies it, *Woman, I know him not.* (4.) His fall was repeated a second time, *ver. 58.* After a little while, before he had time to recollect himself, another saw him, and said, *Even thou art one of them*, as slyly as thou sittest here among the high priest's servants: *Not I, saith Peter, Man, I am not.* And a third time, about the space of an hour after (for, saith the tempter, when he is down, down with him; let us follow the blow, till we get him past recovery) another confidently affirms, strenuously asserts it, *Of a truth this fellow also was with him*, let him deny it if he can, for you may all perceive he is a Galilean. But he that has once told a lie is strongly tempted to persist in it, the beginning of that sin is as the letting forth of water. Peter now not only denies that he is a disciple of Christ, but that he knows any thing of him, *ver. 60. Man, I know not what thou sayest*, I never heard of this Jesus.

2. Peter's getting up again. See how happily he recovered himself, or rather the grace of God recovered him. See how it was brought about:

1. The cock crew, just as he was the third time denying that he knew Christ; and this startled him, and put him upon thinking. Note, Small accidents may have great influences.

2. The Lord turned and looked upon him. This circumstance we had not in the other evangelists, but it is a very remarkable one. Christ is here called the Lord, for there was much of divine knowledge, power and grace appearing in this. Observe, Though Christ had now his back upon Peter, and was upon his trial, when one would think he had something else to mind yet he knew all that Peter said. Note, Christ takes more notice of what we say and do than we think he doth; when Peter disowned Christ, yet Christ did not disown him, though he might justly have cast him off, and never looked upon him more, but have denied him before his Father. It is well for us that Christ doth not deal with us as we deal with him. Christ looked upon Peter, not doubting but that Peter would soon be aware of it, for he knew that though he had denied him with his lips, yet his eye would still be towards him. Observe, Though Peter had now been guilty of a very great offence, and which was very provoking, yet Christ would not call to him, lest he should shame him or expose him, only gave him a look, which none but Peter would understand the meaning of, and it had a great deal in it. (1.) It was a convincing look. Peter said he did not know Christ, Christ turned and looked upon him, as if he should say, Dost thou not know me, Peter? Look me in the face and tell me so. (2.) It was a chiding look, we may suppose he looked upon him and frowned, or some way signified his displeasure. Let us think with what an angry countenance Christ justly looks upon us when we have sinned. (3.) It was an expostulating upbraiding look. What Peter, art thou he that disownest me? thou that wast the most forward to confess me to be the Son of God, and didst solemnly promise thou wouldst never disown me? (4.) It was a compassionate look; he looked upon him with tenderness, poor Peter, how weak is thine heart! how art thou fallen and undone if I do not help thee! (5.) It was a directing look; Christ guided him with his eye, gave him a wink to go out from that sorry company, to retire, and bethink himself a little, and then he would soon see what he had to do. (6.) It was a significant look; it signified the conveying of grace to Peter's heart to enable him to repent; the crowing of the cock would not have brought him to repentance without this look, nor will the external means without special efficacious grace. Power went along with this look to change the heart of Peter, and to bring him to himself to his right mind.

3. Peter remembered the words of the Lord. Note, The grace of God works in and by the word of God, brings that to mind, and sets that home upon the conscience, and so gives the soul the happy turn. *Tolle & lege.*

4. Then Peter went out and wept bitterly. One look from Christ melted him into tears of godly sorrow for sin. The candle was newly put out, and then a little thing lighted it again. Christ looked upon the chief priest, and made no impression upon them at he did on Peter, who had the divine seed remaining in him to work upon. It was not the look from Christ, but the grace of God with it, that recovered Peter and brought him to rights.

63. ¶ And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him. 64. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee? 65. And many other things blasphemously spake they against him. 66. ¶ And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the Scribes came together,

together, and led him into their council, saying. 67. Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: 68. And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. 69. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. 70. Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? and he said unto them, Ye say that I am. 71. And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.

We are here told, as before in the other gospels, 1. How our Lord Jesus was abused by the servants of the high priests. *The objects gathered themselves together against him, the rude and barbarous servants. They that held Jesus, that had him in custody till the court sat, they mocked him, and smote him, ver. 63. they would not allow him to repose himself one minute, though he had had no sleep all night, nor to compose himself, though he was hurried to his trial, and no time given him to prepare for it. They made sport with him; this sorrowful night to him shall be a merry night to them; and the blessed Jesus, like Samson, is made the fool in the play. They hood-winked him, and then according to the common play that young people have among them, they struck him on the face, and continued to do so till he named the person that smote him, ver. 64. intending hereby an affront to his prophetic office, and that knowledge of secret things which he was said to have. We are not told that he said any thing, but bore every thing: hell was let loose, and he suffered it to do its worst. A greater indignity could not be done to the blessed Jesus, yet this was but one instance of many: for, ver. 65. Many other things blasphemously spake they against him. They that condemned him for a blasphemer, were themselves the vilest blasphemers that ever were.*

2. How he was accused and condemned by the great Sanhedrin, consisting of the elders of the people, the chief priests, and the Scribes, who were all up betimes, and got together as soon as it was day, about five of the clock in the morning, to prosecute this matter. *They were working this evil upon their beds, and as soon as ever the morning was light, practised it, Micah ii. 1. They would not have been up so early for any good work.*

It is but a short account that we have here of his trial in the ecclesiastical court.

1. They ask him, *Art thou the Christ?* He was generally believed by his followers to be the Christ, but they could not prove it upon him that he had ever said so *totidem verbis*, and therefore urge him to own it to them, ver. 67. If they had asked him this question with a willingness to admit that he was the Christ, and to receive him accordingly if he could give sufficient proof of his being so, it had been well, and might have been for ever well with them. But they asked it with a resolution not to believe him but a design to ensnare him.

2. He justly complained of their unfair and unjust usage of him, ver. 67, 68. They all, as Jews, professed to expect the Messiah, and to expect him at this time; no other appeared or had appeared, that pretended to be the Messiah, he had no competitor nor likelihood of any; he had given amazing proofs of a divine power going along with him, which made his claims very well worthy of a free and impartial inquiry; it had been but just for these leaders of the people to have taken him into their council, and examined him there as a candidate for the Messiahship, not at the bar as a criminal; but saith he, (1.) *If I tell you, that I am the Christ, and give you never such convincing proofs of it, you are resolved you will not believe.* Why should the cause be brought on before you who have already prejudged it, and are resolved, right or wrong, to run it down, and to condemn it? (2.) *If I ask you what you have to object against the proofs I produce, you will not answer me.* Here he refers to their silence when he puts a question to them, which would have led them to own his authority, chap. xx. 5, 6, 7. They were neither fair judges, nor fair disputants, but when they were pinched with an argument would rather be silent than own their conviction; *you will neither answer me, nor let me go.* If I be not the Christ, you ought to answer the arguments with which I prove that I am; if I be, you ought to let me go: but you will do neither.

3. He referred them to his second coming, for the full proof of his being the Christ, to their confusion, since they would not now admit the proof of it to their conviction, ver. 69. *Hereafter shall the Son of man sit, and be seen to sit on the right hand of the power of God, and then you will not need, to ask whether he be the Christ or no.*

4. Hence they inferred that he set up himself as the Son of God, and asked him *whether he were so or no?* ver. 70. *Art thou then the Son of God?* He called himself the Son of man, referring to Daniel's vision of the Son of man that came near before the Ancient of days, Dan. vii. 13, 14. But they understood so much as to know, that if he was that Son of man, he was also the Son of God, and art thou so? By this it appears to have been the faith of the Jewish Church, that the Messiah should be both Son of man, and Son of God.

5. He owns himself to be the Son of God; *ye say that I am, i. e. I am as ye say; compare Mark xiv. 62. Jesus said, I am.* This confirms Christ's testimony concerning himself, that he was the Son of God, that he stood to it, when he knew he should suffer for standing to it.

6. Upon this they ground his condemnation, ver. 71. *What need we any further witness?* It was true they needed not any further witness to prove that he said he was the Son of God, they had it from his own mouth; but did they not need proof that he was not so before they condemned him as a blasphemer for saying that he was so? Had they no apprehension that it was possible he might be so, and then what horrid guilt they should bring upon themselves in putting him to death? No, *they know not, neither will they understand.* They cannot think it possible he should be the Messiah, though never so evidently clothed with divine power and grace, if he appear not as they expect, in worldly pomp and grandeur. Their eyes being blinded with the admiration of that, they rush on in this dangerous prosecution, as the horse into the battle.

C H A P. XXIII.

This chapter carries on and concludes the history of Christ's sufferings and death; we have here, (1.) His arraignment before Pilate the Roman governor, ver. 1—5. (2.) His examination before Herod, who was tetrarch of Galilee, under the Romans likewise, ver. 6—12. (3.) Pilate's struggle with the people to release Jesus, his repeated testimony concerning his innocence, but his yielding at length to their importunity, and condemning him to be crucified, ver. 13—25. (4.) An account of what passed as they led him to be crucified, and his discourse to the people that followed, ver. 26—34. (5.) An account of what passed at the place of execution, and the indignities done him there, ver. 35—43.

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32—38. (6.) The conversion of one of the thieves as Christ was hanging on the cross, ver. 39—43. (7.) The death of Christ, and the prodigies that attended it, ver. 44—49. (8.) His burial, ver. 50—55.

1. AND the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate. 2. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ a king. 3. And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him, and said, Thou sayest it. 4. Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man. 5. And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. 6. When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean. 7. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time. 8. ¶ And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. 9. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. 10. And the chief priests and Scribes stood and vehemently accused him. 11. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. 12. ¶ And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

Our Lord Jesus was condemned as a blasphemer in the spiritual court, but it was the most impotent malice that could be that that court was acted by, for when they had condemned him, they knew they could not put him to death, and therefore take another course.

First, They accuse him before Pilate; the whole multitude of them arose, when they saw they could go no farther with him in their court, and led him unto Pilate, though it was no judgment day, no assizes or sessions, and they demand justice against him, not as a blasphemer; that was no crime that he took cognizance of, but as one disaffected to the Roman government; which they in their hearts did not look upon as any crime at all, or if it was, they themselves were much more chargeable with it than he was: only it would serve the turn and answer the purpose of their malice: and it is observable, that that which was the pretended crime, for which they employed the Roman powers to destroy Christ, was the real crime, for which the Roman powers not long after destroyed them.

1. Here is the indictment drawn up against him, ver. 2. in which they pretended a real for Cæsar, only to ingratiate themselves with Pilate, but it was all malice against Christ, and nothing else. They misrepresented him, (1.) As making the people rebel against Cæsar. It was true and Pilate knew it, that there was a general uneasiness in the people under the Roman yoke, and they wanted nothing but an opportunity to shake it off; no: they would have Pilate believe, that this Jesus was active to foment that general discontent, which, if the truth was known, they themselves were the aiders and abettors of, *We have found him perverting the nation*; as if converting them to God's government were perverting them from the civil government; whereas nothing tends more to make men good subjects than making them Christ's faithful followers. Christ had particularly taught that they ought to give tribute to Cæsar, though he knew there were those that would be offended at him for it, and yet he is here falsely accused, as forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar. Innocency is no fence against calumny. (2.) As making himself a rival with Cæsar, though the very reason why they rejected him, and would not own him to be the Messiah, was because he did not appear in worldly pomp and power, and did not set up for a temporal prince, nor offer to do any thing against Cæsar; yet that is it they charged him with, that he said, *He himself is Christ a king.* He did say, he was Christ, and if so, then a king, but not such a king as was ever likely to give disturbance to Cæsar. When his followers would have made him a king, John vi. 15. he declined it, though by the many miracles he wrought he made it appear, that if he would have set up in competition with Cæsar, he would have been too hard for him.

2. His pleading to the indictment. Pilate asked him, *Art thou the king of the Jews?* ver. 3. To which he answered, *Thou sayest it, i. e. It is as thou sayest, that I am entitled to the government of the Jewish nation*; but in rivalry with the Scribes and Pharisees, who tyrannize over them in matters of religion, not in rivalry with Cæsar, whose government relates only to their civil interests. Christ's kingdom is wholly spiritual, and will not interfere with Cæsar's jurisdiction. Or, *Thou sayest it*; but canst thou prove it? What evidence hast thou for it? All that know him know the contrary, that he never pretended to be the king of the Jews, in opposition to Cæsar as supreme, or to the governors that were sent by him, but the contrary.

3. Pilate's declaration of his innocence, ver. 4. *He said to the chief priests, and the people that seemed to join with them in the prosecution, I find no fault in this man.* What breaches of your law he may have been guilty of, I am not concerned to enquire; but I find nothing proved upon him, that makes him obnoxious to our court.

4. The continued fury and outrage of the prosecutors, ver. 5. Instead of being moderated by Pilate's declaration of his innocence, and considering, as they ought to do, whether they were not bringing the guilt of innocent blood upon themselves, they were the more exasperated; more exceeding fierce. We do not find that they have any particular fact to produce, much less any evidence to prove it; but they resolve to carry it with noise and confidence, and say it, though they cannot prove it; *He stirs up the people to rebel against Cæsar, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place.* He did stir up the people, but it was not to any thing factious or seditious, but to every thing that was virtuous and praise-worthy. He did teach, but they could not charge him with teaching any doctrine that tended to disturb the public peace, or make the government uneasy or jealous.

Secondly, They accuse him before Herod.

1. Pilate removed him and his cause to Herod's court. The accusers mentioned Galilee, the northern part of Canaan; why, saith Pilate, is he

on against him unknown to him? Must one of his own disciples betray him, as if he had been a hard master to them, or deserved ill at their hands? Must he be betrayed by a kiss? Must the badge of friendship be the instrument of treachery? Was ever a love-token so defecrated and abused? Note, Nothing can be a greater affront or grief to the Lord Jesus than to be betrayed, and betrayed with a kiss, by those that profess relation to him, and an affection for him. Those do so who, under pretence of zeal for his honour, prosecute his servants, who, under the cloke of a seeming affection for the holiness of free grace, give a blow to the root of holiness and strictness of conversation. Many instances there are of Christ's being betrayed with a kiss, by those who under the form of godliness fight against the power of it. It were well if their own consciences would put this question to them which Christ here puts to Judas, *Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?* And will he not repent it? Will he not revenge it?

2. The effort which his disciples made for his protection, ver. 49. *When they saw what would follow*, that those armed men were come to seize him, they said, *Lord shall we smite with the sword?* Thou didst allow us to have two swords, shall we now make use of them? Never more occasion; and to what purpose should we have them if we do not use them? They asked the question, as if they would not have drawn the sword without commission from their Master, but they were in too much haste and too much heat, to stay for an answer; But Peter aiming at the head of one of the servants of the high priest, missed his blow, and cut off his right ear. As Christ, by throwing them to the ground that came to take him, shewed what he could have done, so Peter by this exploit shewed what he could have done too, in so good a cause if he had had leave. The other evangelists tell us what was the check Christ gave to Peter for it. Luke here tells us, (1.) How Christ excused the blow, *Suffer ye thus far*, ver. 51. Dr. Whitby thinks he said this to his enemies who came to take him, to qualify them that they might not be provoked by it to fall upon the disciples, whom he had undertaken the preservation of. *Pass by this injury and affront*, it was without warrant from me, and there shall not be another blow struck. Though Christ had power to have struck them down and struck them dead, yet he speaks them fair, and, as it were, begs their pardon for an assault made upon them by one of his followers, to teach us to give good words even to our enemies. (2.) How he cured the wound, which was more than amends sufficient for the injury; *He touched his ear, and healed him*; fastened his ear on again, that he might not so much as go away stigmatized, though he well deserved it. Christ hereby gave them a proof, (1.) Of his power: He that could heal could destroy if he pleased, which should have obliged them in interest to submit to him. Had they returned the blow upon Peter, he would immediately have healed him; and what could not a small regiment do, that had such a surgeon to it, immediately to help the sick and wounded? (2.) Of his mercy and goodness. Christ here gave an illustrious example to his own rule of doing good to them that hate us, as afterwards he did of praying for them that despitefully use us. Those who render good for evil do as Christ did. One would have thought this generous piece of kindness should have overcome them, that such coals heaped on their heads should have melted them, that they could not have bound him as a malefactor, who had approved himself such a benefactor; but their hearts were hardened.

3. Christ's expostulation with the officers of the detachment that came to apprehend him, to shew what an absurd thing it was for them to make all this rout and noise, ver. 52, 53. Matthew relates it, as said to the multitude; Luke tells us it was said to the chief priests and captains of the temple, who commanded the several orders of the priests, and therefore are here put between the chief priests and the elders, so that they were all ecclesiastics, retainers to the temple, who were employed in this odious piece of service, and some of the first rank too disparaged themselves so far as to be seen in it.

Now see here,

1. How Christ reasons with them concerning their proceedings; What needed they come out in the dead of the night, and with swords and staves. (1.) They knew that he was one that would not resist, or raise the mob against them, he never had done any thing like that; Why then are ye come out as against a thief?

(2.) They knew he was one that would not abscond, for he was daily with them in the temple, in the midst of them, and never sought to conceal himself, nor did they offer to lay hands on him. Before his hour was come, it was folly for them to think to take him, and when his hour was come, it was folly for them to make all this ado to take him.

2. How he reconciles himself to their proceedings; and this we had not before. *But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.* How hard soever it may seem that I should be thus exposed, I submit, for so it is determined; this is the hour allowed you to have your will against me, there is an hour appointed me to reckon for it. Now the power of darkness, Satan, ruler of the darkness of this world is permitted to do his worst, to bruise the heel of the seed of the woman, and I resolve to acquiesce; let him do his worst. *The Lord shall laugh at him, for he sees that his day, his hour, is coming.* Psal. xxxvii. 13. Let this quiet us under the prevalency of the church's enemies, let it quiet us in a dying hour, that, (1.) It is but an hour that is permitted for the triumph of our adversary, a short time, a limited time. (2.) It is their hour which is appointed them, and in which they are permitted to try their strength, that omnipotence may be the more glorified in their fall. (3.) It is the power of darkness that rides master, and darkness must give way to light, and the power of darkness be made to truckle to the prince of light Christ was willing to wait for his triumphs till his warfare was accomplished, and we must be so too.

54 ¶ Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off. 55. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. 56. But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, 'This man also was with him.' 57. And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. 58. And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. 59. And about the space of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, saying, of a truth this fellow also was with them: for he is a Galilean. 60. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately while he yet spake, the cock crew, 61. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. 62. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

We have here the melancholy story of Peter's denying his Master, at the time when he was arranged before the high priest, with those that were of the cabal, that were ready to receive the prey, and to prepare the evidence for his arraignment, as soon as it was day, before the great Sanhedrim, ver. 66. But notice is not taken here, as was in the other evangelists, of Christ's being now upon his examination before the high priest, only of his being brought into the high priest's house, ver. 54. But the manner of expression is observable, they took him, and led him, and brought him, which methinks is like that concerning Saul. 1. Sam. xv. 13. *He is gone about, and passed on, and gone down*; and intimates, that even when they had seized their prey they were in confusion, and for fear of the people, or rather struck with inward terror upon what they had seen and heard, they took him the farthest way about, or rather knew not which way they hurried him, such a hurry were they in in their own bosoms. Now observe,

1. Peter's falling, (1.) It began in sneaking. He followed Christ when he was had away a prisoner, that was well, and shewed a concern for his Master; but he followed him afar off, that he might be out of danger. He thought to trim the matter; to follow Christ, and so to satisfy his conscience, but to follow afar off, and so to save his reputation and sleep in a whole skin. (2.) It proceeded in keeping his distance still, and associating himself with the high priest's servants, when he should have been at his Master's elbow. The servants kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and sat down together, to talk over their night's expedition. Probably, Malchus was among them, and Peter sat down among them, as if he had been one of them, at least would be thought to be so. (2.) His sail itself was disclaiming all acquaintance with Christ and relation to him, disowning him because he was now in distress and danger. He was charged by a sorry simple maid that belonged to the house, with being a retainer to this Jesus, about whom there was now so much noise; she looked wisely upon him as he sat by the fire, only because he was a stranger, and one whom she had not seen before, and concluding that at this time of night there were no neighbors there, and knowing him not to be any of the retinue of the high priest, she concludes him to be one of the retinue of this Jesus, or perhaps she had been some time or other looking about her in the temple, and had seen Jesus there and Peter with him, officious about him, and remembered him; and this man was with him, said she. And Peter, as he had not the courage to own the charge, so he had not the wit and presence of mind to turn it off, as he might have done many ways, and therefore flat and plain denies it, *Woman, I know him not.* (4.) His fall was repeated a second time, ver. 58. After a little while, before he had time to recollect himself, another saw him, and said, *Even thou art one of them*, as sly as thou sittest here among the high priest's servants: *Not I*, said Peter, *Man, I am not.* And a third time, about the space of an hour after (for, saith the temple, when he is down, down with him; let us follow the blow, till we get him past recovery) another confidently affirms, *strenuously asserts it*, *Of a truth this fellow also was with him*, let him deny it if he can, for you may all perceive he is a Galilean. But he that has once told a lie is strongly tempted to persist in it; the beginning of that sin is as the letting forth of water. Peter now not only denies that he is a disciple of Christ, but that he knows any thing of him, ver. 60. *Man, I know not what thou sayest*, I never heard of this Jesus.

2. Peter's getting up again. See how happily he recovered himself, or rather the grace of God recovered him. See how it was brought about:

1. The cock crew, just as he was the third time denying that he knew Christ; and this startled him, and put him upon thinking. Note, Small accidents may have great influences.

2. The Lord turned and looked upon him. This circumstance we had not in the other evangelists, but it is a very remarkable one. Christ is here called the Lord, for there was much of divine knowledge, power and grace appearing in this. Observe, Though Christ had now his back upon Peter, and was upon his trial, when one would think he had something else to mind yet he knew all that Peter said. Note, Christ takes more notice of what we say and do than we think he doth; when Peter disowned Christ, yet Christ did not disown him, though he might justly have cast him off, and never looked upon him more, but have denied him before his Father. It is well for us that Christ doth not deal with us as we deal with him. Christ looked upon Peter, not doubting but that Peter would soon be aware of it, for he knew that though he had denied him with his lips, yet his eye would still be towards him. Observe, Though Peter had now been guilty of a very great offence, and which was very provoking, yet Christ would not call to him, lest he should shame him or expose him, only gave him a look, which none but Peter would understand the meaning of, and it had a great deal in it. (1.) It was a convincing look. Peter said he did not know Christ, Christ turned and looked upon him, as if he should say, Dost thou not know me, Peter? Look me in the face and tell me so. (2.) It was a chiding look, we may suppose he looked upon him and frowned, or some way signified his displeasure. Let us think with what an angry countenance Christ justly looks upon us when we have sinned. (3.) It was an expostulating upbraiding look. What Peter, art thou he that disownest me? thou that wast the most forward to confess me to be the Son of God, and didst solemnly promise thou wouldst never disown me? (4.) It was a compassionate look; he looked upon him with tenderness, poor Peter, how weak is thine heart! how art thou fallen and undone if I do not help thee! (5.) It was a directing look; Christ guided him with his eye, gave him a wink to go out from that sorry company, to retire, and bethink himself a little, and then he would soon see what he had to do. (6.) It was a significant look; it signified the conveying of grace to Peter's heart to enable him to repent; the crowing of the cock would not have brought him to repentance without this look, nor will the external means without special efficacious grace. Power went along with this look to change the heart of Peter, and to bring him to himself to his right mind.

1. Peter remembered the words of the Lord. Note, The grace of God works in and by the word of God, brings that to mind, and sets that home upon the conscience, and so gives the soul the happy turn. *Tolle & lege.*

4. Then Peter went out and wept bitterly. One look from Christ melted him into tears of godly sorrow for sin. The candle was newly put out, and then a little thing lighted it again. Christ looked upon the chief priest, and made no impression upon them at he did on Peter, who had the divine seed remaining in him to work upon. It was not the look from Christ, but the grace of God with it, that recovered Peter and brought him to rights.

63. ¶ And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him. 64. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee? 65. And many other things blasphemously spake they against him. 66. ¶ And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the Scribes came together,

together, and led him into their council, saying. 67. Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: 68. And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. 69. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. 70. Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? and he said unto them, Ye say that I am. 71. And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.

We are here told, as before in the other gospels, 1. How our Lord Jesus was abused by the servants of the high priests. *The objects gathered themselves together against him*, the rude and barbarous servants. They that held Jesus, that had him in custody till the court sat, they mocked him, and smote him, ver. 63. they would not allow him to repose himself one minute, though he had had no sleep all night, nor to compose himself, though he was hurried to his trial, and no time given him to prepare for it. They made sport with him; this sorrowful night to him shall be a merry night to them; and the blessed Jesus, like Samson, is made the fool in the play. They hood-winked him, and then according to the common play that young people have among them, they struck him on the face, and continued to do so till he named the person that smote him, ver. 64. intending hereby an affront to his prophetic office, and that knowledge of secret things which he was said to have. We are not told that he said any thing, but bore every thing: hell was let loose, and he suffered it to do its worst. A greater indignity could not be done to the blessed Jesus, yet this was but one instance of many: for, ver. 65. *Many other things blasphemously spake they against him.* They that condemned him for a blasphemer, were themselves the vilest blasphemers that ever were.

2. How he was accused and condemned by the great Sanhedrin, consisting of the elders of the people, the chief priests, and the Scribes, who were all up betimes, and got together as soon as it was day, about five of the clock in the morning, to prosecute this matter. They were working this evil upon their beds, and as soon as ever the morning was light, practised it, Micah ii. 1. They would not have been up so early for any good work.

It is but a short account that we have here of his trial in the ecclesiastical court.

1. They ask him, *Art thou the Christ?* He was generally believed by his followers to be the Christ, but they could not prove it upon him that he had ever said *to them* *verbis*, and therefore urge him to own it to them, ver. 67. If they had asked him this question with a willingness to admit that he was the Christ, and to receive him accordingly if he could give sufficient proof of his being so, it had been well, and might have been for ever well with them. But they asked it with a resolution not to believe him but a design to ensnare him.

2. He justly complained of their unfair and unjust usage of him, ver. 67, 68. They all, as Jews, professed to expect the Messiah, and to expect him at this time; no other appeared or had appeared, that pretended to be the Messiah, he had no competitor nor likelihood of any; he had given amazing proofs of a divine power going along with him, which made his claims very well worthy of a free and impartial inquiry; it had been but just for these leaders of the people to have taken him into their council, and examined him there as a candidate for the Messiahship, not at the bar as a criminal; but with he, (1.) *If I tell you, that I am the Christ*, and give you never such convincing proofs of it, you are resolved you will not believe. Why should the cause be brought on before you who have already prejudged it, and are resolved, right or wrong, to run it down, and to condemn it? (2.) *If I ask you what you have to object against the proofs I produce, you will not answer me.* Here he refers to their silence when he puts a question to them, which would have led them to own his authority, chap. xx. 5, 6, 7. They were neither fair judges, nor fair disputants, but when they were pinched with an argument would rather be silent than own their conviction; you will neither answer me, nor let me go. If I be not the Christ, you ought to answer the arguments with which I prove that I am; if I be, you ought to let me go: but you will do neither.

3. He referred them to his second coming, for the full proof of his being the Christ, to their confusion, since they would not now admit the proof of it to their conviction, ver. 69. *Hereafter shall the Son of man sit*, and be seen to sit on the right hand of the power of God, and then you will not need to ask whether he be the Christ or no.

4. Hence they inferred that he set up himself as the Son of God, and asked him whether he were so or no? ver. 70. *Art thou then the Son of God?* He called himself the Son of man, referring to Daniel's vision of the Son of man that came near before the Ancient of days, Dan. vii. 13, 14. But they understood so much as to know, that if he was that Son of man, he was also the Son of God, and art thou so? By this it appears to have been the faith of the Jewish Church, that the Messiah should be both Son of man, and Son of God.

5. He owns himself to be the Son of God; ye say that I am, i. e. I am as ye say; compare Mark xiv. 62. *Jesus said, I am.* This confirms Christ's testimony concerning himself, that he was the Son of God, that he stood to it, when he knew he should suffer for standing to it.

6. Upon this they ground his condemnation, ver. 71. *What need we any further witness?* It was true they needed not any further witness to prove that he said he was the Son of God, they had it from his own mouth; but did they not need proof that he was not so before they condemned him as a blasphemer for saying that he was so? Had they no apprehension that it was possible he might be so, and then what horrid guilt they should bring upon themselves in putting him to death? No, they know not, neither will they understand. They cannot think it possible he should be the Messiah, though never so evidently clothed with divine power and grace, if he appear not as they expect, in worldly pomp and grandeur. Their eyes being blinded with the admiration of that, they rush on in this dangerous prosecution, as the horse into the battle.

C H A P. XXIII.

This chapter carries on and concludes the history of Christ's sufferings and death; we have here, (1.) His arraignment before Pilate the Roman governor, ver. 1—5. (2.) His examination before Herod, who was tetrarch of Galilee, under the Romans likewise, ver. 6—12. (3.) Pilate's struggle with the people to release Jesus, his repeated testimonies concerning his innocency, but his yielding at length to their importunity, and condemning him to be crucified, ver. 13—25. (4.) An account of what passed as they led him to be crucified, and his discourse to the people that followed, ver. 26—34. (5.) An account of what passed at the place of execution, and the indignities done him there, ver. 35—43.

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32—34. (6.) The description of one of the things as Christ was crucified on the cross, ver. 39—43. (7.) The death of Christ, and the prodigies that attended it, ver. 44—49. (8.) His burial, ver. 50—56.

1. AND the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate. 2. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a king. 3. And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him, and said, Thou sayest it. 4. Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man. 5. And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. 6. When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean. 7. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time. 8. ¶ And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. 9. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. 10. And the chief priests and Scribes stood and vehemently accused him. 11. And Herod with his men of war set him at naught, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. 12. ¶ And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

Our Lord Jesus was condemned as a blasphemer in the ecclesiastical court; but it was the most impotent malice that could be brought against him, for when they had condemned him, they knew they could do no more to him by death, and therefore take another course.

First, They accuse him before Pilate; the whole multitude of them, when they saw they could go no farther with him in the ecclesiastical court, led him unto Pilate, though it was no judgment day, he did not go to Pilate to demand justice against him, not as a blasphemer; that was a crime which they took cognizance of, but as one disaffected to the Roman government, which they in their hearts did not look upon as any crime at all, or if it was, they themselves were much more chargeable with it than he was; only it would serve the turn and answer the purpose of their malice: as if it were a crime, that which was the pretended crime, for which they could lay the Roman powers to destroy Christ, was the real crime, for which the Roman power, not long after destroyed them.

1. Here is the indictment drawn up against him, ver. 2. in which they pretended a real for Caesar, only to ingratiate themselves with Pilate, but it was all malice against Christ, and nothing else. They first presented him, (1.) As making the people rebel against Caesar. It was true and Pilate knew it, that there was a general uneasiness in the people under the Roman yoke, and they wanted nothing but an opportunity to strike it off; now they would have Pilate believe, that this Jesus was active to foment that general discontent, which, if the truth was known, they themselves were the authors and abettors of, *We have found him perverting the nation*; as if converting them to God's government were perverting them from the civil government; whereas nothing tends more to make men good subjects than making them Christ's faithful followers. Christ had particularly taught that they ought to give tribute to Caesar, though he knew there were those that would be offended at him for it, and yet he is here falsely accused, as forbidding to give tribute to Caesar. Innocency is no fence against calumny. (2.) As making himself a rival with Caesar, though the very reason why they rejected him, and would not own him to be the Messiah, was because he did not appear in worldly pomp and power, and did not set up for a temporal prince, nor offer to do any thing against Caesar; yet that is it they charged him with, that he said, *He himself is Christ a king*. He did say, he was Christ, and if so, then a king, but not such a king as was ever likely to give disturbance to Caesar. When his followers would have made him a king, John vi. 15, he declined it, though by the many miracles he wrought he made it appear, that if he would have set up in competition with Caesar, he would have been too hard for him.

2. His pleading to the indictment. Pilate asked him, *Art thou the king of the Jews?* ver. 3. To which he answered, *Thou sayest it*, i. e. It is as thou sayest, that I am entitled to the government of the Jewish nation; but in rivalry with the Scribes and Pharisees, who tyrannized over them in matters of religion, not in rivalry with Caesar, whose government relates only to their civil interests. Christ's kingdom is wholly spiritual, and will not interfere with Caesar's jurisdiction. Or, *Thou sayest it*; but canst thou prove it? What evidence hast thou for it? All that know him know the contrary, that he never pretended to be the king of the Jews, in opposition to Caesar as supreme, or to the governors that were sent by him, but the contrary.

3. Pilate's declaration of his innocency, ver. 4. He said to the chief priests, and the people that seemed to join with them in the prosecution, *I find no fault in this man*. What breaches of your law he may have been guilty of, I am not concerned to enquire; but I find nothing proved upon him, that makes him obnoxious to our court.

4. The continued fury and outrage of the prosecutors, ver. 5. Instead of being moderated by Pilate's declaration of his innocency, and considering, as they ought to do, whether they were not bringing the guilt of innocent blood upon themselves, they were the more exasperated; more exceeding fierce. We do not find that they have any particular fact to produce, much less any evidence to prove it; but they resolve to carry it with noise and confidence, and say it, though they cannot prove it; *He stirs up the people to rebel against Caesar, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place*. He did stir up the people, but it was not to any thing factious or seditious, but to every thing that was virtuous and praise-worthy. He did teach, but they could not charge him with teaching any doctrine that tended to disturb the public peace, or make the government uneasy or jealous.

Secondly, They accuse him before Herod.

1. Pilate removed him and his cause to Herod's court. The accusers, mentioned Galilee, the northern part of Canaan; why, saith Pilate, is he

of that country? Is he a Galilean? *ver. 6.* Yes, said they, that is his head quarters; there he hath spent most of his time; let us send him to Herod then, (saith Pilate) for Herod is now in town, and it is but fit he should have cognisance of his cause, since he belongs to Herod's jurisdiction. Pilate was already sick of the cause, and desirous to rid his hands of it, and that seems to be the true reason of sending him to Herod. But, God ordered it so for the more evident fulfilling of the scripture, as appears *Acts iv. 26, 27.* where that of David, *Psal. ii. 2.* *The kings of the earth and the rulers set themselves against the Lord and his anointed,* is expressly said to be fulfilled in Herod and Pontius Pilate.

2. Herod was very willing to have the examining of him, *ver. 8.* *When he saw Jesus he was exceeding glad,* and perhaps the more glad because he saw him a prisoner, saw him in bonds: He had heard many things of him in Galilee, where his miracles had for a great while been all the talk of the country, and he longed to see him; not for any affection he had for him or his doctrine, but purely out of curiosity; and it was only to gratify that, that he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him, which would serve him to talk of as long as he lived. And in order to this, he questioned with him in many things, that at length he might bring him to something in which he might shew his power. Perhaps he pumped him concerning things secret or things to come, or concerning his curing of diseases. But Jesus answered him nothing; nor would he gratify him so much as with the repetition of one miracle. The poorest beggar that asked a miracle for the relief of his necessity, was never denied; but this proud prince, that asked a miracle merely for the gratifying of his curiosity, is denied; he might have seen Christ and his wondrous works many a time in Galilee, and would not, and therefore it is justly said, now he would see them and shall not; they are hid from his eyes because he knew not the day of his visitation. Herod thought now he had him in bonds he might command a miracle, but miracles must not be made cheap, nor omnipotence be at the beck of the greatest potentate.

3. His prosecutors appeared against him before Herod, for they were restless in the prosecution; they stood and vehemently accused him, *ver. 10.* *impudently and boldly,* so the word signifies. They would make Herod believe that he had poisoned Galilee too with his seditious notions. Note, It is no new thing for good men and good ministers, that are real and useful friends to the civil government, to be falsely accused as factious and seditious, and enemies to government.

4. Herod was very abusive to him; he, with his men of war, his attendants and officers, and great men, set him at nought. They made nothing of him, so the word is: Horrid wickedness! to make nothing of him who made all things. They laughed at him as a fool, for they knew he had wrought many miracles to befriend others, and why would he not now work one to befriend himself? or else as one that had lost his power, and was become weak as other men. Herod, that had been acquainted with John Baptist, and had more knowledge of Christ too, than Pilate had, was more abusive to Christ than Pilate was: for knowledge without grace doth but make men the more ingeniously wicked. Herod arrayed Christ in a gorgeous robe, some gaudy painted clothes, as a mock-king; and so he taught Pilate's soldiers afterwards to do him the same indignity. He was ring-leader in that abuse.

5. Herod returned him to Pilate, and it proved an occasion of the making of their friends, they having been for some time before at variance. Herod could not get sight of a miracle, but would not condemn him neither as a malefactor, and therefore sent him again to Pilate, *ver. 11.* and so returned Pilate's civility and respect in sending the prisoner to him; and this mutual obligation, with the messages that passed between them on this occasion, brought them to a better understanding one of another, than there had been of late between them, *ver. 12.* They had been at enmity between themselves probably upon Pilate's killing the Galileans, who were Herod's subjects, *Luke xiii. 1.* or some other such matter of controversy as used to be among princes and great men. Observe, How those that quarrelled with one another, yet could unite against Christ, as Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek, though divided among themselves were confederate against the Israel of God, *Psal. lxxxiii. 7.* Christ is the great peace-maker; both Pilate and Herod owned his innocency, and their agreeing in that cured their disagreeing in other things.

13. ¶ And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, 14. Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: 15. No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. 16. I will therefore chastise him and release him. 17. (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.) 18. And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas: 19. (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder was cast into prison.) 20. Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus spake again to them. 21. But they cried saying, Crucify him, crucify him. 22. And he said unto them the third time, Why what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go. 23. And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. 24. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. 25. And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

We have here the blessed Jesus run down by the mob, and hurried to the cross in the storm of a popular noise and tumult, raised by the malice and artifice of the chief priests, as agents for the prince of the power of the air.

1. Pilate solemnly protests, that he believes he has done nothing worthy of death or of bonds. And if he did believe so, he ought immediately to have discharged him; and not only so, but to have protected him from the fury of the priests and rabble, and to have bound his prosecutors to their good behaviour for their insolent carriage. But being himself an ill man, he had no kindness for Christ. And having made himself otherwise obnoxious, was afraid of displeasing either the emperor or the people, and therefore for want of integrity, he called together the chief priests and rulers

and people; whom he should have dispersed, as a riotous, routous and seditious assembly, and forbid them to come near him; and will hear what they have to say, to whom he should have turned a deaf ear, for he plainly saw what spirit acted them, *ver. 14.* *You have brought (saith he) this man to me,* and because I have a respect for you, I have examined him before you, and have heard all you have to alledge against him, and I can make nothing of it, I find no fault in him, you cannot prove the things whereof you accuse him.

2. He appeals to Herod concerning him, *ver. 15.* *I sent you to him,* who is supposed to have known more of him than I have done, and he hath sent him back, not convicted of any thing, nor under any mark of his displeasure; in his opinion his crimes are not capital. He has laughed at him as a weak man, but has not stigmatized him as a dangerous man; he thought Bedlam a fitter place for him than Tyburn.

3. He proposeth to release him if they will but consent to it. He ought to have done it without asking leave of them, *Fiat justitia ruat cælum.* But the fear of man brings many into this snare, that whereas justice should take place, though heaven and earth come together, they will do an unjust thing against their consciences, rather than pull an old house about their ears. Pilate declares him innocent, and therefore has a mind to release him, yet to please the people, (1.) He will release him under the notion of a malefactor, because of necessity he must release one, *ver. 17.* so that whereas he ought to have been released by an act of justice, and thanks to nobody, he would have him released by an act of grace, and not be beholden to the people for it. (2.) He will chastise him and release him. If no fault be to be found in him, why should he be chastised? there is as much injustice in scourging as in crucifying an innocent man; nor would it be justified by pretending that this would satisfy the clamours of the people, and make him the object of their pity, who was now to be the object of their envy. We must not do evil that good may come.

4. The people choose rather to have Barabbas released; a wretched fellow, that had nothing to recommend him to their favour, but the daringness of his crimes, he was imprisoned for a sedition made in the city, and for murder, of all crimes among men the least pardonable, yet this was the criminal that was preferred before Christ, *ver. 18, 19.* *Away with this man and release unto us Barabbas:* And no wonder that such a man is the favourite and darling of such a mob, he that was really seditious, rather than he that was really loyal, and falsely accused of sedition.

5. When Pilate urged the second time that Christ should be released, they cried out, crucify him, crucify him, *ver. 20, 21.* They not only will have him die, but will have him die so great a death; nothing less will serve but he must be crucified. *Crucify him, crucify him.*

6. When Pilate the third time reasoned with them to shew them the unreasonableness and injustice of it, they were the more peremptory and outrageous, *ver. 22.* *Why, what evil hath he done? Name his crime: I have found no cause of death,* and you cannot say what cause of death you have found in him, and therefore if you will but speak the word, I will chastise him and let him go. But popular fury, the more it is complimented the more furious it grows; they were instant with loud voices, with great noises or outcries, not requesting, but requiring that he might be crucified; as if they had as much right at the feast to demand the crucifying of one that was innocent, as the release of one that was guilty.

7. Pilate's yielding at length to their importunity. The voice of the people and of the chief priests prevailed, and were too hard for Pilate, and overruled him to go contrary to his convictions and inclinations. He had not courage to go against so strong a stream, but gave sentence that it should be as they required, *ver. 24.* Here is judgment turned away backward, and justice standing afar off, for fear of popular fury: *Truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter, Isa. lix. 14.* Judgment was looked for, but behold oppression; righteousness, but behold a cry, *Isa. v. 7.* This is repeated, *ver. 25.* with the aggravating circumstance of the release of Barabbas; *He released unto them him, that for sedition and murder was cast into prison,* who hereby would be hardened in his wickedness, and do the more mischief, because him they had desired, being altogether such an one as themselves; but he delivered Jesus to their will; and he could not deal more barbarously with him than to deliver him to their will, who hated him with a perfect hatred, and whose tender mercies were cruelty.

26. ¶ And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. 27. ¶ And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. 28. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. 29. For behold the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. 30. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. 31. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

We have here the blessed Jesus, the Lamb of God, led as a lamb to the slaughter, to the sacrifice. It is strange with what expedition they went through his trial; how they could do so much work in so little time though they had so many great men to deal with, attendance on whom useth to be a work of time. He was brought before the chief priests at break of day, *chap. xxii. 66.* after that to Pilate, then to Herod, then to Pilate again; and there seems to have been a long struggle between Pilate and the people about him. He was scourged and crowned with thorns, and contumeliously used, and all this was done in four or five hours time, or six at most, for he was crucified between nine o'clock and twelve. Christ's persecutors resolve to lose no time, for fear lest his friends at the other end of the town should get notice of what they were doing, and should rise to rescue him. Never any one was so chased out of the world as Christ was; but so he himself said, *Yet a little while, and ye shall not see me;* a very little while indeed.

Now as they led him to away to death we find,

1. One that was a bearer that carried his cross, Simon by name, a Cyrenian, who probably was a friend of Christ, and was known to be so, and this was done to put a reproach upon him; they laid Christ's cross upon him that he might bear it after Jesus, *ver. 26.* lest Jesus should faint under it and die away, and so prevent the farther instances of malice they designed. It was a pity, but a cruel pity, that gave him this ease.

2. Many that were mourners, true mourners, who followed him bewailing and lamenting him. These were not only his friends and well-wishers, but the

the common people that were not his enemies, and were moved with compassion towards him, because they had heard the same of him, and what an excellent useful man he was, and had reason to think he suffered unjustly; this drew a great crowd after him, as is usual at executions, especially of those that have been persons of distinction. *A great company of people followed him, especially of women, ver. 27.* Some led by pity, others by curiosity, but they also (as well as those that were his particular friends and acquaintance) bewailed and lamented him. Though there were many that reproached and reviled him, yet there were some that valued him and pitied him, and were sorry for him, and were partakers with him in his sufferings. The dying of the Lord Jesus may perhaps move natural affections in many that are strangers to devout affections; many bewail Christ that do not believe in him, and lament him, that do not love him above all.

Now here we are told what Christ said to these mourners, though one would think he should be wholly taken up with his own concern, yet he found time and heart to take cognizance of their tears. Christ *died lamented*, and has a bottle for the tears of those that lamented him. *He turned to them*, though they were strangers to him, and bid them *not weep for him, but for themselves*; he diverts their lamentation into another channel, ver. 28.

1. He gives them a general direction concerning their lamentations. *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, not that they were to be blamed for weeping for him, but commended rather; those hearts were hard indeed that were not affected with such sufferings of such a person; but they must not weep only for him, those were profitless tears that they shed for him, but rather let them weep for themselves and for their children*, with an eye to the destruction that was coming upon Jerusalem, which some of them might live to see, and share in the calamities of, or at least their children would, for whom they ought to be solicitous. Note, When with an eye of faith we behold Christ crucified we ought to weep, not for him but for ourselves. We must not be affected with the death of Christ as with the death of a common person whose calamity we pity, or of a common friend whom we are like to part with; the death of Christ was a thing peculiar, it was his victory and triumph over his enemies, it was our deliverance, and the purchase of eternal life for us. And therefore weep not for him, but let us weep for our own sins, and the sins of our children that were the cause of his death; and weep for fear (such were the tears here prescribed) of the miseries we shall bring upon ourselves if we slight his love and reject his grace, as the Jewish nation did, which brought upon them the ruin here foretold. When our dear relations and friends die in Christ we have no reason to weep for them who have put off the burden of the flesh, are made perfect in holiness, and are entered into perfect rest and joy, but for ourselves and our children who are left behind in a world of sins and sorrows and snares.

2. He gives them a particular reason why they should weep for themselves and for their children. *For behold, sad times are coming upon your city, it will be destroyed, and you will be involved in the common destruction.* When Christ's own disciples sorrowed after a godly sort for his leaving them, he wiped away their tears with the promise that he would see them again, and they should rejoice, John xvi. 22. But when these daughters of Jerusalem bewailed him only with a worldly sorrow, he turned their tears into another channel, and told them they should have something given them to cry for. Let them be afflicted and mourn, and weep, James iv. 9. He had lately wept over Jerusalem himself, and now he bids them weep over it. Christ's tears should set us a weeping. Let the daughters of Zion that own Christ for their king rejoice in him, for he comes to save them; but let the daughters of Jerusalem, that only weep for him, but do not take him for their King, weep and tremble to think of his coming to judge them.

Now the destruction of Jerusalem is here foretold by two proverbial sayings that might then fitly be used, which both speak it very terrible, that what people commonly dread they would then desire, to be *written childless*, and to be *buried alive*. (1.) They would wish to be *written childless*. Whereas commonly those that have no children envy those that have, as Rachel envied Leah, then those that have children will find them such a burden in attempting to escape, and such a grief when they see them either fainting for famine, or falling by the sword, that they will envy those that have none, and say, *Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare*, that have no children to be given up to the murderer, or to be snatched out of his hands. It would not only go ill with those who at that time were *with child* or *giving suck*, as Christ had said, Matt. xxiv. 19. but it would be terrible to those who ever had had children, and suckled them, and had them now alive. See Hos. ix. 11, 12, 13, 14. See the vanity of the creature, and the uncertainty of its comforts, for such may be the changes of providence concerning us, that those very things may become the greatest burdens, cares, and griefs to us, which we have delighted in as the greatest blessings. (2.) They would wish to be *buried alive*, ver. 30. They shall begin to *say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, cover us*. This also refers to a passage in the same prophecy with the former, Hos. x. 8. They shall wish to be hid in the darkest caves that they might be out of the noise of these calamities. They will be willing to be sheltered upon any terms, though with the hazard of being crushed to pieces. This would be the language, especially of the great and mighty men, Rev. vi. 16. They that would not flee to Christ for refuge, and put themselves under his protection, will in vain call to *hills and mountains* to shelter themselves from his wrath.

3. He shews how natural it was for them to infer that desolation from his sufferings, ver. 31. *If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* Some think this is borrowed from Ezek. xx. 47. *The fire shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree.* These words may be applied, (1.) More particularly to the destruction of Jerusalem, which Christ here foretold, and which the Jews by putting him to death brought upon themselves. *If they*, i. e. the Jews, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, *do these things upon the green tree*, if they do thus abuse an innocent and excellent person for his good works, how may they expect God to deal with them, for their so doing, who have made themselves a *dry tree*, a corrupt and wicked generation, and good for nothing? If this be their sin, what do you think will be their punishment? Or take it thus; if they, i. e. the Romans, their judges and their soldiers abuse me thus, who have given them no provocation, who am to them as a green tree, which you seem to be as much enraged at, *what will they do by Jerusalem*, and the Jewish nation, who will be so very provoking to them, and make themselves as a *dry tree*, as fuel to the fire of their resentments? If God suffer those things to be done to me, what will he appoint to be done to those barren trees, of whom it had been often said, that they should be *hewn down and cast into the fire*? Matt. iii. 10.—vii. 19. (2.) It may be applied more generally to all the revelations of God's wrath against sin and sinners. If God deliver me up to such sufferings as these, because I am made a sacrifice for sin, what will he do with sinners themselves? Christ was a *green tree* fruitful and flourishing; now if such things were done to him, we may from thence infer what should have been done to the whole race of mankind if he had not interposed,

and what shall be done to those that continue dry trees, notwithstanding all that is done to make them fruitful: If God did this to the Son of his love when he found but sin imputed to him, what shall he do to the generation in his wrath when he finds sin reigning in them? If the Father were pleased in doing these things to the green tree, why should he be so loth to do it to the dry? Note, The consideration of the bitter of sufferings our Lord Jesus should engage us to stand in awe of the justice of God, and to tremble before him. The best saints compared with Christ are *dry trees*; if he suffer, why may not they expect to suffer? and what then shall the damnation of sinners be?

32. And there were also two other malefactors led with him to be put to death. 33. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. 34. ¶ Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots, 35. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God. 36. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar. 37. And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself. 38. And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. 39. ¶ And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, if thou be Christ, save thyself and us. 40. But the other answering rebuked him, saying dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41. And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

In these verses we have,

1. Divers passages which we had before in Matthew and Mark, concerning Christ's sufferings.

(1.) That there were two other malefactors led with him to the place of execution; who it is probable, had been for some time under sentence of death, and were designed to be executed as this day, which was probably the pretence for making such haste in the prosecution of Christ, that he and these two malefactors might be executed together, and one solemnity might serve.

(2.) That he was crucified at a place called Calvary, *Kēnor*, the Greek name for Golgotha, the place of a *scull*; an ignominious place, to add to the reproach of his sufferings, but significant, for there he triumphed over death as it were upon his own dunghill. He was crucified, i. e. his hands and feet were nailed to the cross as it lay upon the ground; and then it was lifted up and fastened into the earth, or some socket to receive it. This was a painful and shameful death above any other.

(3.) That he was crucified in the midst between two thieves, as if he had been the worst of the three; thus he was not only treated as a transgressor, but numbered with them, the worst of them.

(4.) That the soldiers who were employed in the execution seized his garments as their fee, and divided them among themselves by lot; they parted his raiment and cast lots; it was worth so little that if it were divided it would come next to nothing, and therefore they cast lots for it.

(5.) That he was reviled and reproached, and treated with all the scorn and contempt imaginable when he was lifted up upon the cross. It was strange that so much barbarity should be found in the human nature: The people stood beholding, not at all concerned, but rather pleasing themselves with the spectacle; and the rulers, whom from their office one would take to be men of sense, and men of honour, they stood among the rabble and derided him, to set those on that were about them to do so too: And they said, *He saved others, let him save himself*. Thus is he upbraided for the good works he had done, as it were indeed for these that they crucified him. They triumph over him as if they had conquered him, whereas he was himself then more than a conqueror; they challenge him to save himself from the cross, when he was saving others by the cross. *If he be the Christ the chosen of God*, let him save himself. They knew that the Christ is the chosen of God; designed by him and dear to him. If he as the Christ would deliver our nation from the Romans, (and they could not form any other idea but that of the Messiah) let him deliver himself from the Romans that have him now in their hands. Thus the Jewish rulers jeered him as captivated by the Romans, instead of subduing them: The Roman soldiers jeered him as the *King of the Jews*; a people good enough for such a prince, and a prince good enough for such a people. They mocked him, ver. 36, 37. they made sport with him, and made a jest of his sufferings; and when they were drinking sharp sour wine themselves, such as was generally allotted them, they triumphantly asked him if he would pledge them, or drink with them. And they said, *If thou be the king of the Jews save thyself*; for as the Jews prosecuted him under the notion of a pretended Messiah, so the Romans under the notion of a pretended king.

(6.) That the superscription over his head, setting forth his crime was, *this is the king of the Jews*, ver. 38. He is put to death for pretending to be the king of the Jews, so they meant it; but God intended it to be a declaration of what he really was, notwithstanding his present disgrace: he is the king of the Jews, the king of the church, and his cross is the way to his crown. This was written in those that are called the *three learned languages*, Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, for those are best learned that have learned Christ. It was written in these three languages that it might be known and read of all men; but God designed by it to signify that the gospel of Christ should be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, and be read in all languages. The Gentile philosophy made the Greek tongue famous, the Roman laws and government made the Latin tongue so, and the Hebrew excelled them all for the sake of the Old Testament. In these three languages is Jesus Christ proclaimed king. Young scholars, that are taking pains at school to make themselves masters of these three languages, should aim at this, that in the use of them they may increase their acquaintance with Christ.

2. Here are two passages which we had not before, and they are very remarkable ones.

1. Christ's prayer for his enemies, *ver. 34. Father, forgive them.* Seven remarkable words Christ spoke after he was nailed to the cross, and before he died, and this is the first. One reason why he died the death of the cross was, that he might have liberty of speech to the last, and so might glorify his Father, and edify those about him. As soon as ever he was fastened to the cross, or while they were nailing him, he prayed this prayer: in which observe,

1. The petition. *Father, forgive them*; one would think he should have prayed, *Father, consume them*; the Lord look upon it, and requite it; The sin they were now guilty of might justly have been made unpardonable, and justly might they have been excepted by name out of the act of indemnity. No, these are particularly *prayed for*. Now he made intercession for transgressors as was foretold, *Isa. liii. 12.* and it is to be added to his prayer, *John xvii.* to complete the specimen he gave of his intercession within the vail: that for saints, this for sinners. Now the sayings of Christ, upon the cross as well as his sufferings had a further reach than they seemed to have. This was a mediatorial word, and explicatory of the intent and meaning of his death, *Father, forgive them* not only these, but all that shall repent and believe the gospel; and he did not intend that these should be forgiven upon any other terms. *Father, that which I am now suffering and dying for is in order to this, that poor sinners may be pardoned.* Note, 1. The great thing which Christ died to purchase and procure for us is the forgiveness of sin. 2. This is that which Christ intercedes for, for all that repent and believe in the virtue of his satisfaction: his blood speaks this, *Father, forgive them.* 3. The greatest sinners may, through Christ, upon their repentance, hope to find mercy. *Father, forgive them*, though they were his persecutors and murderers.

2. The plea; *For they know not what they do*; for, if they had known, they would not have crucified him, *1 Cor. ii. 8.* There was a vail upon his glory and upon their understandings, and how could they see through two veils? They wished his blood on them and their children, but had they known what they did, they would have unwished it again. Note, 1. The crucifiers of Christ *know not what they do*: They that speak ill of religion, speak ill of that which they know not, and it is because they will not know it. (2.) There is a kind of ignorance that doth in part excuse sin: ignorance through want of the means of knowledge, or of a capacity to receive instruction, through the infelicities of education or inadvertency. The crucifiers of Christ were kept in ignorance by their rulers, and had prejudices against him instilled into them, so that in what they did against Christ and his doctrine they thought they did God service, *John xvi. 2.* Such are to be pitied and prayed for. This prayer of Christ was answered not long after, when many of those that had a hand in his death were converted by Peter's preaching.

This is written also for example to us. (1.) We must in prayer call God Father, and come to him with reverence and confidence as children to a father. (2.) The great thing we must beg of God both for ourselves and others, is the forgiveness of sins. (3.) We must pray for our enemies, and those that hate and persecute us; must extenuate their offences, and not aggravate them, as we must our own; *they know not what they do*; *peradventure it was an oversight*; and must be earnest with God in prayer for the forgiveness of their sins, their sins against us. This is Christ's example to his own rule, *Matt. v. 44, 45. Love your enemies*; and it very much strengthens the rule, for if Christ loved and prayed for such enemies, what enemies can we have which we are not obliged to love and pray for?

2. The conversion of the thief upon the cross, which is an illustrious instance of Christ's triumphing over principalities and powers then, when he seemed to be triumphed over by them. Christ was crucified between two thieves, and in them were represented the different effects which the cross of Christ would have upon the children of men, to whom it would be brought near in the preaching of the gospel. They are all malefactors, all guilty before God. Now the cross of Christ is to some a favour of life unto life, to others of death unto death. To them that perish it is foolishness, but to them that are saved it is the wisdom of God and the power of God.

1. Here was one of these malefactors that was *hardened to the last*. At the cross of Christ he *railed on him*, as others did, *ver. 39.* he said, *If thou be the Christ, as they say thou art, save thyself and us.* Though he was now in pain and agony, and in the valley of the shadow of death, yet that did not humble his proud spirit, nor teach him to give good language, no, not to his fellow-sufferer. *Though thou dray a fool in a mortar, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.* No troubles will of themselves work a change in a wicked heart, but sometimes they irritate the corruption, which one would think they should mortify. He challengeth Christ to save both himself and them. Note, There are some that have the impudence to rail upon Christ and yet the confidence to expect to be saved by him; nay, and to conclude, that if he do not save them, he is not to be looked upon as the Saviour.

2. Here was the other of them that was *softened at the last*. It was said in Matthew and Mark, that though the thieves, even they that were crucified with him, reviled him, which some think is by the figure put for one of them; but others think they both reviled him at first, till the heart of one of them was wonderfully changed, and with it his language on a sudden. This malefactor, when just ready to fall into the hands of Satan, was snatched as a brand out of the burning, and made a monument of divine mercy and grace, and Satan was left to roar as a lion disappointed of his prey. This gives no encouragement to any to put off their repentance to their death-bed, or to hope that then they shall find mercy: for though it is certain that true repentance is never too late, it is certain that late repentance is seldom true. None can be sure that they shall have time to repent at death, but every man may be sure he cannot have the advantages that this penitent thief had, whose case was altogether extraordinary. He never had any offer of Christ, nor day of grace before now: he was designed to be made a singular instance of the power of Christ's grace, now at a time when he was crucified in weakness. Christ having conquered Satan in the destruction of Judas, and the preservation of Peter, erects this further trophy of his victory over him, in the conversion of this malefactor, as a specimen of what he would do.

We shall see the case extraordinary if we observe,

1. The extraordinary operations of God's grace upon him, which appeared in what he said. Here were so many evidences given in a short time of a blessed change wrought in him, as that more could not have been given in so little a compass.

1. See what he said to the other malefactor, *ver. 40, 41.* (1.) He reproved him for railing on Christ, as destitute of the fear of God, and having no sense at all of religion. *Doest not thou fear God?* This implies that it was the fear of God which restrained him from following the multitude to do this evil. I fear God, and therefore dare not do it, and doest not thou? All that have their eyes opened see this to be at the bottom of the wickedness of the wicked, that they have not the fear of God before their eyes.

If thou hadst any humanity in thee thou wouldst not insult over one that is thy fellow-sufferer; thou art in the same condition: thou art a dying man too, and therefore whatever these wicked people do, it ill becomes thee to abuse a dying man. (2.) He owns that he deserved what was done to him. *We indeed justly*, it is likely they both suffered for one and the same crime, and therefore he spake with the more assurance, *We receive the due reward of our deeds.* This magnifies divine grace, as acting in a distinguishing way: These two had been comrades in sin and suffering, and yet one is saved, and the other perishes; two that had gone together all along hitherto, and yet now one taken and the other left. He doth not say *thou indeed justly*, but *we*. Note, True penitents acknowledge the justice of God in all the punishments of their sin. God has done right, but *we have done wickedly.* (3.) He believes Christ to have suffered wrongfully. Though he was condemned in two courts, and run upon as if he had been the worst of malefactors, yet this penitent thief is convinced by his carriage in his sufferings, that he has done nothing amiss. The chief priest would have him crucified between the malefactors, as one of them, but this thief has more sense than they, and owns he is none of them, *ἀλλ' ἄλλος*, nothing absurd or unbecoming his character. Whether he had before heard of Christ and his wondrous works doth not appear, but the Spirit of grace enlightened him with this knowledge, and enabled him to say, *this man has done nothing amiss.*

2. See what he said to our Lord Jesus, *ver. 42. Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.* This is the prayer of a dying sinner to a dying Saviour. It was the honour of Christ to be thus prayed to, though he was upon the cross reproached and reviled: it was the happiness of the thief thus to pray; perhaps he never prayed before, and yet now was heard and saved at the last gasp. Whilst there is life there is hope; and while there is hope there is room for prayer.

1. Observe his faith in this prayer. In this confession of sin, *ver. 41.* He discovered repentance towards God. In this petition he discovered faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. He owns him to be Lord, and to have a kingdom, and that he was going to that kingdom; that he should have authority in that kingdom, and that those should be happy whom he favours; and to believe and confess all this was a great thing at this time of day. Christ was now in the depth of disgrace, deserted by his own disciples, reviled by his own nation, suffering as a pretender, and not delivered by his Father: He made this profession before those prodigies happened, which put honour upon his sufferings, and which startled the centurion; yet *verily we have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.* He believed another life after this, and desired to be happy in that life, not as the other thief, to be saved from the cross, but to be well done for when the cross had done its work.

2. Observe his humility in this prayer. All his request is, *Lord, remember me*: He doth not pray, *Lord, prefer me*, as they did, *Matt. xx. 21.* though he having the honour to as none of the disciples had, to drink of Christ's cup, and to be baptized with his baptism either on his right hand or on his left, in his sufferings, when his own disciples had deserted him, he might have had some colour to ask as they did, to sit on his right hand and on his left in his kingdom; acquaintance in suffering hath sometimes gained such a point, *Jer. lii. 31, 32.* But he is far from the thought of it, all he begs is, *Lord, remember me*: referring himself to Christ in what way to remember him. It is a request like that of Joseph to the chief Butler, *think on me*, *Gen. xl. 14.* and it sped better, the chief butler forgot Joseph, but Christ remembered this thief.

3. There is an air of importunity and fervency in this prayer. He doth, as it were, breathe out his soul in it. *Lord, remember me*, and I have enough; I desire no more; into thy hands I commit my case. Note, To be remembered by Christ now he is in his kingdom, is what we should earnestly desire and pray for, and it will be enough to secure our welfare living and dying. Christ is in his kingdom interceding: *Lord, remember me*, and intercede for me. He is there ruling; *Lord, remember me*, and rule in me by thy Spirit. He is there preparing places for those that are his: *Lord, remember me*, and prepare a place for me; remember me at death, remember in me the resurrection. See *Job xiv. 13.*

2. The extraordinary grants of Christ's favour to him; *Jesus said unto him*, in answer to his prayer, *Verily I say unto thee, I the Amen, the faithful witness, I say amen to this prayer, put my fiat to it: nay, thou shalt have more than thou didst ask, This day thou shalt be with me in paradise*, *ver. 43.* Observe,

1. To whom this was spoken. To the penitent thief, to him, and not to his companion; Christ upon the cross is like Christ upon the throne, for now is the judgment of this world, one departs with a curse, the other with a blessing. Though Christ was now himself in the greatest struggle and agony, yet he had a word of comfort to speak to a poor penitent that committed himself to him. Note, Even great sinners, if they be true penitents, shall, through Christ obtain not only the pardon of their sins, but a place in the paradise of God, *Heb. ix. 15.* This magnifies the riches of free grace, that rebels and traitors shall not only be pardoned but preferred, thus preferred.

2. By whom this was spoken: This was another mediatorial word which Christ spoke, though upon a particular occasion, yet with a general intention to explain the true intent and meaning of his sufferings, as he died to purchase the forgiveness of sins for us, *ver. 34.* so also to purchase eternal life for us. By this word we are given to understand that Jesus Christ died to open the kingdom of heaven to all penitent obedient believers.

1. Christ here lets us know that he was going to paradise himself; to *hades*, to the invisible world; his human soul was removing to the place of separate souls; not to the place of the damned, but to paradise the place of the blessed. By this he assures us, that his satisfaction was accepted, and the Father was well pleased in him, else he had not gone to paradise, that was the beginning of the joy set before him, which he comforted himself with the prospect of. He went by the cross to the crown, and we must not think of going any other way, or of being perfected but by sufferings.

2. He lets all penitent believers know, that when they die they shall go to be with him there. He was now as a priest purchasing this happiness for them, and is ready, as a king, to confer it upon them when they are prepared and made ready for it. See here how the happiness of heaven is set forth to us. (1.) It is *paradise*, a garden of pleasure, the *paradise of God*, *Rev. ii. 7.* alluding to the garden of Eden, in which our first parents were placed when they were innocent. In the second Adam we are restored to all we lost in the first Adam, and more, to a heavenly paradise instead of an earthly one. (2.) It is being *with Christ* there. That is the happiness of heaven, to see Christ, and sit with him, and share in his glory, *John xvii. 24.* (3.) It is immediate upon death. *This day thou shalt be with me*; to-night, before to-morrow; the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, immediately are in joy and felicity; the spirits of just men are immediately made perfect. Lazarus departs, and is comforted presently; and Paul with Christ immediately, *Phil. i. 23.*

44. And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

45. And

45. And the sun was darkened, and the vail of the temple was rent in the midst. 46. ¶ And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. 47. Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. 48. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned. 49. And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off beholding these things.

In these verses we have three things:

First, Christ's dying magnified by the prodigies that attended it: only two are here mentioned, which we had an account of before.

1. The darkening of the sun at noon day: it was now about the sixth hour, that is, according to our computation, twelve o'clock at noon: and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour; the sun was eclipsed, and the air exceedingly clouded at the same time; both which concurred to this thick darkness, which continued three hours, not three days, as that of Egypt did.

2. The rending of the vail of the temple. The former prodigy was in the heavens, this in the temple; for both these are the houses of God, and could not but feel it when the Son of God was thus abused, and thus signify their repentment of it. By this rending of the vail was signified the taking away of the ceremonial law, which was a wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, and of all other difficulties and discouragements in our approach to God, so that now we may come boldly to the throne of grace.

Secondly, Christ's dying explained (ver. 46,) by the words with which he breathed out his soul. Jesus had cried with a loud voice, when he said, *Why hast thou forsaken me?* So we are told in Matthew and Mark, and, it should seem, it was with a loud voice that he said this too. To shew his earnestness, and that all the people might take notice of it: and this he said, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.*

1. He borrowed these words from his father David, *Psal. xxxi. 5.* not that he needed to have words put into his mouth, but he chose to make use of David's words, to shew that it was the Spirit of Christ that testified in the Old Testament prophets, and that he came to fulfil the Scripture. Christ died with Scripture in his mouth. Thus he directs us to make use of scripture-language in our addresses to God.

2. In this address to God he calls him *Father*, when he complained of being forsaken, he cried, *Eli, Eli, My God, my God;* but to shew that that dreadful agony of his soul was now over, he here calls God *Father*. When he was giving up his life and soul for us, he did for us call God *Father*, that we through him might receive the adoption of sons.

3. Christ made use of these words in a sense peculiar to himself as Mediator. He was now to make his soul an offering for our sin, *Isa. liii. 10.* To give his life a ransom for many, *Matt. xx. 28.* By the eternal Spirit to offer himself, *Heb. ix. 14.* He was himself both the priest and the sacrifice; our souls were forfeited, and his must go to redeem the forfeiture. The price must be paid into the hands of God, the party offended by sin, to him he had undertaken to make full satisfaction. Now by these words he offered up the sacrifice, did, as it were, lay his hand upon the head of it; and surrendered it, *Gen. xiv. 18.* I deposit it, I pay it down into thy hands: Father, accept of my life and soul instead of the lives and souls of the sinners I die for. The *animus offerentis*, the good will of the offerer, was requisite to the acceptance of the offering: Now Christ here expresseth his cheerful willingness to offer himself, as he had done when it was first proposed to him, *Heb. x. 9, 10.* *Lo, I come to do thy will, by the which will we are sanctified.*

4. Christ hereby signifies his dependence upon his Father for his resurrection, by the re-union of his soul and body. He commends his spirit into his Father's hand to be received into paradise and returned the third day. By this it appears, that our Lord Jesus, as he had a true body, so he had a reasonable soul, which existed in a state of separation from the body, and thus he was made like unto his brethren; this soul he lodged in his Father's hand, committed it to his custody, resting in hope that it should not be left in *hades*, in its state of separation from the body, no, not so long as that the body might see corruption.

5. Christ has hereby left us an example; has fitted those words of David to the purpose of dying saints, and hath, as it were, sanctified them for their use. In death our great care should be about our souls, and we cannot more effectually provide for their welfare than by committing them now into the hands of God, as a Father, to be sanctified and governed by his Spirit and grace, and at death by committing them into his hands to be made perfect in holiness and happiness. We must shew that we are freely willing to die, that we firmly believe another life after this, and are desirous of it, by saying, *Father into thy hands I commit my spirit.*

Thirdly, Christ's dying improved, by the impressions it made upon those that attended him.

1. The centurion that had command of the guard was much affected at what he saw, ver. 47. He was a Roman, a Gentile, a stranger to the consolations of Israel, and yet he glorified God. He never saw such amazing instances of divine power, and therefore took occasion from thence to adore God as the Almighty. And he bore a testimony to the patient sufferer. Certainly this was a righteous man, and was unjustly put to death. God's manifesting his power so much to do him honour was a plain evidence of his innocency. His testimony in Matthew and Mark goes further: *Truly this was the Son of God;* but in his case this amounts to the same; for if he was a righteous man, he said very truly when he said he was the Son of God; and therefore that testimony of his concerning himself must be admitted, for if it were false he was not a righteous man.

2. The disinterested spectators could not but be concerned. This is taken notice of only here, ver. 48. All the people that came together to that sight, as is usual upon such occasions, beholding the things which were done, could not but go away very serious for the time, whatever they were when they came home, *They smote their breasts and returned.* (1.) They laid the thing very much to heart for the present: They looked upon it as a wicked thing to put him to death, and could not but think that some judgment of God would come upon their nation for it. Probably, those very people were of those that had cried, *Crucify him, crucify him,* and when he was nailed to the cross, reviled and blasphemed him; but now were so terrified with the darkness and earthquake, and the uncommon manner of his expiring, that they had not only their mouths stopped, but their consciences startled, and in remorse for what they had done, as the publican, they smote upon their breasts, beat upon their own hearts, as those that had indignation at themselves. And some think this was a happy step towards that good work, which was afterwards wrought upon them, when they were pricked to the heart, *Acts ii. 37.* (2.) Yet it should seem the impression soon wore off;

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they smote their breasts and returned. They did not shew any further token of respect to Christ, nor enquire more concerning him, but went home, and we have reason to fear in a little time they quite forgot it. Thus many that see Christ evidently set forth crucified among them in the word and sacraments are a little affected for the present, but it doth not continue; they smite their breasts and return. They see Christ's face in the glass of the ordinances and admire him, but they go away and straightway forget what manner of man he is, and what reason they have to love him.

3. His own friends and followers were forced to keep their distance, and yet got as near as they could and durst to see what was done, ver. 49. All his acquaintance that knew him, and were known of him, stood afar off, for fear lest if they had been near him they should have been taken up as favourers of him; this was part of his sufferings as of Job's, chap. xiv. 12. *He has put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me,* *Psal. lxxxviii. 18.* And the women that followed him together from Galilee were beholding these things, not knowing what to make of them, nor so readily as they should have been to take them for certain preliums of his resurrection. Now was Christ set for a sign that should be spoken against, as Simeon foretold, that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed, *Luke ii. 34, 35.*

50. ¶ And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just: 51. (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God. 52. This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. 53. And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. 54. And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. 55. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. 56. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments, and rested the sabbath-day according to the commandment.

We have here an account of Christ's burial: For he must be brought not only to death but to the dust of death, *Psal. cxlii. 15.* according to the sentence, *Gen. iii. 19.* *To the dust thou shalt return:* Observe.

1. Who buried him: His acquaintance stood afar off; they had neither money to bear the charge, nor courage to bear the odium of burying him decently; but God raised up one that had both; a man named Joseph, ver. 50. His character is, that he was a good man and a just, a man of unspotted reputation for virtue and piety; was not only just to all, but good to all that needed him; and care to bury the dead, as becomes the hope of the resurrection of the dead, is one instance of goodness and beneficence: He was a person of quality, a counsellor, a senator, a member of the Sanhedrin, one of the elders of the Jewish church: Having said this of him, it was necessary to add, that though he was of that body of men who had put Christ to death, yet he had not consented to their counsel and deed, ver. 51. though it was carried by the majority, yet he entered his protest against it, and followed not the multitude to do evil. Note, That evil counsel and deed shall not be reckoned our act, which we have not consented to: Nay, he not only dissented openly from those that were enemies to Christ, but he consented secretly with those that were his friends: He himself waited for the kingdom of God; he believed the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah and his kingdom, and he expected the accomplishment of them. This was the man that appears upon this occasion to have a true respect for the Lord Jesus. Note, There are many who are hearty in Christ's interests, who, though they do not make any shew in their outward profession of it, yet will be more ready to do him a piece of real service when there is occasion, than others that make a greater figure and noise.

2. What he did towards the burying of him. (1.) He went to Pilate, the judge that condemned him, and begged the body of Jesus, for it was at his disposal; and though he might have raised a party sufficient to have carried off the body by violence, yet he would take the regular course, and do it peaceably. (2.) He took it down, it should seem with his own hands, and wrapped it in linen. They tell us it was the manner of the Jews (and that the word here used signifies so much) to roll the bodies of the dead, as we do little children in their swaddling clothes; so that the piece of fine linen which he bought whole, he cut into many pieces for that purpose. It is said of Lazarus he was bound hand and foot, *John xi. 44.* Grave-clothes are to the saints as swaddling-clothes, which they shall outgrow and put off when they come to the perfect man.

3. Where he was buried; in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, that the prison of the grave might be made strong, as the church when she was brought into darkness had her way inclosed with hewn stone, *Lam. iii. 2, 9.* But it was a sepulchre in which never man before was laid, for he was buried on such an account as never any one before him was buried, only in order to his rising again the third day by his own power; and he was to triumph over the grave so as never any man did.

4. When he was buried, ver. 54. On the day of the preparation, when the sabbath drew on. This is given us a reason why they made such haste with the funeral, because the sabbath drew on, which required their attendance to other work, preparing for the sabbath, and going forth to welcome it. Note, Weeping must not hinder sowing. Though they were in tears for the death of Christ, yet they must apply themselves to the sanctifying of the sabbath. And when the sabbath draws on there must be preparation; Our worldly affairs must be so ordered, as that they may not hinder us from our sabbath work; and our holy affections must be so excited, as that they may carry us on in it.

5. Who attended the funeral, ver. 55. not any of the disciples, but only the women that came with him from Galilee, ver. 55. who, as they staid by him while he hung on the cross, so they followed him, all in tears, no doubt, and beheld the sepulchre where it was, what was the way to it, and how his body was laid in it. They were led to this, not by their curiosity, but by their affection to the Lord Jesus, which was strong as death, cruel as the greze, and which many zealers could not quench. Here was a silent funeral, and not a solemn one, and yet his rest was glorious.

6. What preparation was made for the embalming of his body after he was buried, ver. 56. They returned and prepared spices and ointments, which was more an evidence of their love than of their faith; for had they remembered and believed what he had so often told them, that he should rise again the third day, they would have spared their cost and pains herein, as knowing that in a short time there would be a greater honour put upon his body by the glory of his resurrection, than they could put upon it with their

their most precious ointments; but as busy as they were in this preparation, they rested on the sabbath-day, and did none of this fervile work thereon, not according to the custom of their nation, but according to the commandments of their God, which, though the day be altered, is still in full force; Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy.

C H A P. XXIV.

Our Lord Jesus went gloriously down to death, in spite of the malice of his enemies, who did all they could to make his death ignominious; but he rose again more gloriously; of which we have an account in this chapter: And the proofs and evidences of Christ's resurrection are more fully related by this evangelist, than they were by Matthew and Mark. Here is, (1.) Assurance given by two angels, to the women who visited the sepulchre, that the Lord Jesus was risen from the dead, according to his own word, which the angels refer them to, ver. 1—7. and the report of this to the apostles, ver. 8—11. (2.) The visit which Peter made to the sepulchre, and his discoveries there, ver. 12. (3.) Christ's conference with the two disciples that were going to Emmaus, and his making of himself known to them, ver. 13—35. (4.) His appearing to the eleven disciples themselves the same day at evening, ver. 36—48. (5.) The farewell he gave them, and his ascension into heaven, and the joy and praise of his disciples whom he left behind, ver. 49—53.

1. **N**OW upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. 2. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. 3. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. 4. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: 5. And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? 6. He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, 7. Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. 8. And they remembered his words, 9. And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. 10. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. 11. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. 12. Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

The manner of the re-uniting of Christ's soul and body in his resurrection is a mystery, one of the secret things that belong not to us; but the infallible proofs of his resurrection, that he did indeed rise from the dead, and was thereby proved to be the Son of God, are things revealed which belong to us and to our children, and some of them we have here in these verses; which relate the same story for substance that we had in Matthew and Mark.

1. We have here the affection and respect which the good women that had followed Christ shewed to him, after he was dead and buried, ver. 1. As soon as ever they could, after the sabbath was over, they came to the sepulchre to embalm his body, not to take it out of the linen in which Joseph had wrapped it, but to anoint the head and face, and perhaps the wounded hands and feet, and to scatter sweet spices upon and about the body; as it is usual with us to strew flowers about the dead bodies and graves of our friends, only to shew our good-will towards the taking off the deformity of death, if we could, and to make them somewhat the less loathsome to those that are about them. The zeal of those good women for Christ did continue; the spices which they had prepared the evening before the sabbath, at a great expence, they did not upon the second thought, when they had slept upon it, dispose of otherwise, suggesting, to what purpose is this waste? But they brought them to the sepulchre on the morning after the sabbath, early, very early. It is a rule of charity, Every man according as he possesseth in his heart, so let him give, 2 Cor. ix. 7. What is prepared for Christ, let it be used for him. Notice is taken of the names of these women, Mary Magdalen and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, grave matronly women it should seem they were: Notice is also taken of certain others with them, ver. 1. and again, ver. 10. These that had not joined in preparing the spices, yet would go along with them to the sepulchre; as if the number of Christ's friends increased when he was dead, John xii. 24, 32. The daughters of Jerusalem, when they saw how inquisitive the spouse was after her beloved, were desirous to seek him with her, Cant. vi. 1. so were these other women. The zeal of some provokes others.

2. The surprize they were in when they found the stone rolled away, and the grave empty, ver. 2, 3, they were much perplexed at that (ver. 4.) which they had much reason to rejoice in, that the stone was rolled away from the sepulchre, by which it appeared that he had a legal discharge and leave to come out; and that they found not the body of the Lord Jesus, by which it appeared he had made use of his discharge and was come out. Note, Good Christians often perplex themselves about that, with which they should comfort and encourage themselves.

3. The plain account which they had of Christ's resurrection from two angels that appeared to them in shining garments, not only white but bright, and casting a lustre about them; they first saw one angel without the sepulchre, who presently went in and sat with another angel in the sepulchre, one at the head, and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain; so the evangelists may be reconciled.

The women, when they saw the angels, were afraid, lest they had some ill news for them; but instead of inquiring of them, bowed down their faces to the earth, to look for their dear Master in the grave: They would rather find him in his grave-clothes, than angels themselves in their shining gar-

ments: A dying Jesus has more beauty in the eyes of a believer than angels themselves. These women, like the spouse, when found by the watchman, (and angels are called watchers) enter not into any other conversation with them, but *say ye him whom my soul loveth?* Now here,

(1.) They upbraid the women with the absurdity of the search they were making, ver. 5. *Why seek ye the living among the dead?* Witness is hereby given to Christ, that he is living, of him it is witnessed that he liveth, Heb. vii. 8. and it is the comfort of all the saints, *I know that my Redeemer liveth*; for because he lives we shall live also. But a reproof is given to those that look for him among the dead; among the dead heroes that the Gentiles worshipped, as if he were but like one of them, that look for him in an image, or a crucifix, the work of men's hands, or among unwritten traditions and the inventions of men. And indeed all they that expect happiness and satisfaction in the creature, or perfection in this imperfect state, may be said to seek the living among the dead.

(2.) They assure them that he is risen from the dead, ver. 6. *He is not here, but is risen*, is risen by his own power: He has quitted his grave to return no more to it. These angels were competent witnesses, for they had been sent express from heaven with orders for his discharge. And we are sure that their record is true; they durst not tell a lie.

(3.) They refer them to his own words, *Remember, what he spake to you, when he was yet in Galilee*. If they had duly believed and observed the prediction of it, they would easily have believed the thing itself when it came to pass; and therefore that the tidings might not be such a surprize to them as it seemed to be, he repeats to them what Christ had often said in their hearing, *The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men*; and though it was done by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, yet they that did it were not the less sinful for doing it; he told them that he must be crucified, surely they could not forget that which they had with so much concern seen fulfilled; and would not that bring to their mind, that which always followed, *the third day he shall rise again*.

Observe, These angels from heaven bring not any new gospel, but put them in mind, as the angels of the churches do, of the sayings of Christ, and teach them how to improve and apply them.

4. Their satisfaction in this account, ver. 8. the women seemed to acquiesce; they remembered his words when they were thus put in mind of them, and concluded from thence, if he were risen it was no more than they had reason to expect; and now were assured of the preparations they had made to embalm him on the third day, who had often said he would on the third day rise again. Note, A seasonable remembrance of the words of Christ will help us to a right understanding of his providence.

5. The report they brought of this to the apostles. They returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest of Christ's disciples, ver. 9. It doth not appear that they were together in a body, they were scattered every one to his own, perhaps scarce two or three of them together in the same lodgings, but one went to some of them, and another to others of them, so that in a little time, that morning, they got them all notice of it. But we are told, ver. 11. how the report was received, *their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not*. They thought it was only the fancy of the women, and imputed it to the power of imagination, for they also had forgotten Christ's words, and wanted to be put in mind of them, not only what he had said to them in Galilee some time ago, but what he had said very lately in the night wherein he was betrayed, *Again a little while and ye shall see me. I will see you again*. One would be amazed at the stupidity of these disciples who had themselves so often professed, that they believed Christ to be the Son of God and the true Messiah, had been so often told he must die and rise again, and then enter into his glory, had seen him more than once raise the dead, that they should be so backward to believe his raising himself; surely it would seem the less strange to them, when hereafter this complaint would justly be taken up by them, to remember, that when time was it might justly have been taken up against them, *Who hath believed our report?*

6. The enquiry which Peter made hereupon, ver. 12. It was Mary Magdalen that brought the report to him, as appears John xx. 1, 2. where this story of his running to the sepulchre is more particularly related. (1.) Peter hastened to the sepulchre, upon the report; perhaps ashamed of himself to think that Mary Magdalen should have been there before him; and yet, perhaps, he had not been so ready to go thither now, if the women had not told him, among other things, that *the watch was fled*. Many that are swift-footed enough when there is no danger, are but cow-hearted when there is. Peter now ran to the sepulchre, who but the other day ran from his Master. (2.) He looked into the sepulchre, and took notice how orderly the linen clothes in which Christ was wrapped were taken off and folded up, and laid by themselves, but the body was gone. He was very particular in making his observations, as if he would rather credit his own eyes than the testimony of the angels. (3.) He went away, as he thought, not much the wiser, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass. Had he remembered the words of Christ, even this was enough to satisfy him that he was risen from the dead, but having forgotten them, he is only amazed with the thing, and knows not what to make of it. There is many a thing puzzling and perplexing to us, which would be both plain and profitable if we did but rightly understand the words of Christ, and had them ready to us.

13. And behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. 14. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. 15. And it came to pass, that while they communed together, and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. 16. But their eyes were holden, that they should not know him. 17. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? 18. And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are to come to pass there in these days? 19. And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: 20. And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. 21. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day

day since these things were done. 22. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; 23. And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. 24. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. 25. Then he said unto them, O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? 27. And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. 28. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. 29. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. 30. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. 31. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. 32. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? 33. And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, 34. Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. 35. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

This appearance of Christ to the two disciples, going to Emmaus, was mentioned, and but just mentioned before, *Mark* xvi. 12. here it is largely related: it happened the same day that Christ rose, the first day of the new world that rose with him. One of these two disciples was Cleopas, or Alpheus, said by the ancients to be the brother of Joseph, Christ's supposed father; who the other was, is not certain. Some think it was Peter; it should seem indeed that Christ did appear particularly to Peter that day, which the eleven spoke of among themselves, *ver.* 34. and Paul mentions, *1 Cor.* xv. 5. But it could not be Peter that was one of the two, for he was one of the eleven to whom the two returned; and besides, we know Peter so well as to think, that if he had been one of the two he would have been the chief speaker, and not Cleopas. It was one of those that were associate with the eleven, mentioned, *ver.* 9.

Now in this passage of story we may observe,

1. The walk and talk of these two disciples. *They went to a village called Emmaus*, which is reckoned to be about two hours walk from Jerusalem; it is here said to be about sixty furlongs, seven measured miles, *ver.* 13. Whether they went thither upon business, or to see some friend, doth not appear: I suspect they were going homewards to Galilee, with an intention not to enquire more after this Jesus; that they were meditating a retreat, and stole away from their company without asking leave or taking leave; for the accounts brought them that morning of their master's resurrection, seemed to them as idle tales; and if so, no wonder they began to think of making the best of their way home.

But as they travelled, they talked together of all these things which had happened, *ver.* 14. They had not courage to confer of these things, and consult what was to be done in the present juncture at Jerusalem, for fear of the Jews; but when they were got out of the hearing of the Jews, they could talk it over with more freedom. They talked over these things, reasoning with themselves concerning the probabilities of Christ's resurrection, for according as these appeared, they would either go forward, or return back to Jerusalem. Note, It well becomes the disciples of Christ when they are together, to talk of his death and resurrection; thus they may improve one another's knowledge, refresh one another's memory, and stir up one another's devout affections.

2. The good company they met with upon the road, when Jesus himself came and joined himself to them, *ver.* 15. They communed together and reasoned, and perhaps were warm at the argument, one hoping that their master was risen, and would set up his kingdom, the other despairing; Jesus himself drew near as a stranger, that seeing them travel the same way that he went, told them he should be glad of their company.

We may observe it for our encouragement to keep up Christian conference and edifying discourse among us, that where but two together are well employed in the work of that kind, Christ will come to them and make a third. When they that fear the Lord speak one to another, the Lord hearkens and hears, and is with them of a truth; so that two thus twisted in faith and love become a threefold cord not easily broken, *Eccles.* iv. 12. They in their communings and reasonings together were searching for Christ, comparing notes concerning him, that they might come to more knowledge of him, and now Christ comes to them. Note, They who seek Christ shall find him: he will manifest himself to those that inquire after him; and give knowledge to those who use the helps for knowledge which they have. When the spouse inquired of the watchman concerning her beloved, it was but a little that she passed from them, but she found him, *Cant.* iii. 4.

But though they had Christ with them, they were not at first aware of it, *ver.* 16. Their eyes were held that they should not know him; it should seem there was both an alteration of the object, for it is said in *Mark*, that now he appeared in another form; and a restraint upon the organ, for here it is said, that their eyes were held by a divine power; or as some think, there was a confusion in the medium; the air was so disposed that they could not discern who it was. No matter how it was, but so it was, they did not know him; Christ so ordering it that they might the more freely discourse with him, and be with them; and that it might appear, that his word, and the influence of it, did not depend upon his bodily presence, which the disciples had too much doted upon, and must be weaned from; but he could teach them and warn their hearts by others, who should have his spiritual presence with them; and should have his grace going along with them unseen.

3. The conference that was between Christ and them, when he knew

them and they knew not him. Now Christ and his disciples, as is usual when friends meet incognito, or in a disguise, are here crossing questions.

1. Christ's first question to them is, concerning their present sadness, which plainly appeared in their countenances, *ver.* 17. *What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another as ye walk, and are sad?* It is a very kind and friendly enquiry. Observe,

(1.) They were sad, it appeared to a stranger that they were so. (1.) They had lost their dear Master, and were in their own apprehensions quite disappointed in their expectations from him. They had given up the cause, and knew not what course to take to retrieve it. Note, Christ's disciples have reason to be sad when he withdraws from them; to fast when the bridegroom is taken from them. (2.) Though he was risen from the dead yet either they did not know it, or did not believe it, and so they were still in sorrow: Note, Christ's disciples are often sad and sorrowful, even then when they have reason to rejoice, but through the weakness of their faith they cannot take the comfort that is offered to them. (3.) Being sad, they had communications one with another concerning Christ. Note, 1. It becomes Christians to talk of Christ. Were our hearts as full of him and of what he has done and suffered for us, as they should be, out of the abundance of the heart the mouth would speak, not only of God and his providence, but of Christ and his grace and love. 2. Good company and good converse is an excellent antidote against prevailing melancholy. When Christ's disciples were sad, they did not each one get by himself, but continued as he sent them out, two and two, for two is better than one, especially in times of sorrow. Giving vent to the grief, may perhaps give ease to the grieved; and by talking it over we may talk ourselves, or our friends may talk us into a better frame. Joint-mourners should be mutual comforters; comforts sometimes come best from such.

(2.) Christ came up to them and inquired into the matter of their talk, and the cause of their grief. *What manner of communications are these?* Though Christ was now entered into his state of exaltation, yet he continued tender of his disciples, and concerned for their comfort. He speaks as one troubled to see their melancholy; *Wherefore look ye so fully to day?* *Gen.* xl. 7. Note, Our Lord Jesus takes notice of the sorrow and sadness of his disciples, and is afflicted in their afflictions. Christ has hereby taught us, (1.) To be conversible: Christ here fell into discourse with two grave serious persons, though he was a stranger to them and they knew him not, and they readily embraced it. It doth not become Christians to be morose and sly, but to take pleasure in good society. (2.) We are hereby taught to be compassionate. When we see our friends in sorrow and sadness, we should like Christ here, take cognizance of their grief, and give them the best counsel and comfort we can, *Weep with them that weep.*

2. In answer to this, they put a question to him concerning his strangeness, *ver.* 18. *Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that are come to pass there in these days?* Observe,

(1.) Cleopas gave him a civil answer; he doth not rudely ask him, what is that to you what we are talking of, and bid him go about his business. Note, We ought to be civil to those who are civil to us, and to carry ourselves obligingly to all, both in word and deed. It was a dangerous time now with Christ's disciples, yet he was not jealous of this stranger, that he had any design upon them, to inform against them or bring them into trouble. Charity is not forward to think evil, no not of strangers.

(2.) He is full of Christ himself and of his death and sufferings, and wonders that every body else is not so too. What, art thou such a stranger in Jerusalem as not to know what has been done to our Master there? Note, Those are strangers indeed in Jerusalem that know not of the death and sufferings of Christ. What, are they daughters of Jerusalem, and yet so little acquainted with Christ, as to ask what is thy beloved more than another beloved?

(3.) He is very willing to inform this stranger concerning Christ, and to draw on further discourse with him upon this subject. He would not have any one that had the face of a man to be ignorant of Christ. Note, Those who have themselves the knowledge of Christ crucified should do what they can to spread that knowledge, and lead others into an acquaintance with him. And it is observable, these disciples that were so forward to instruct the stranger were instructed by him; for to him that has and uses what he has, shall be given.

(4.) It appears by what Cleopas saith, that the death of Christ made a mighty noise in Jerusalem, so that it could not be imagined any man should be such a stranger in the city, as not to know of it; it was all the talk of the town, and discoursed of in all companies. Thus the matter of fact came to be universally known, which after the pouring out of the Spirit was to be explained.

3. Christ, by way of reply, asked concerning their knowledge, *ver.* 19. *He said unto them what things?* thus making himself yet more a stranger. Observe,

(1.) Jesus Christ made light of his own sufferings in comparison with the joy set before him, which was the recompense of it. Now he was entering upon his glory; see with that unconcernedness he looks back upon his sufferings; *What things?* he had reason to know what things; for to him they were bitter things, and heavy things, and yet he asks what things? The sorrow was forgotten for joy that the man-child of our salvation was born. He took pleasure in infirmities for our sakes, to teach us to do so for his sake.

(2.) Those whom Christ will teach, he will first examine how far they have learned: they must tell him what things they know, and then he will tell them what was the meaning of these things, and lead them into the mystery of them.

4. They hereupon give him a particular account concerning Christ, and the present posture of his affairs. Observe the story they tell, *ver.* 19, &c.

(1.) Here is a summary of Christ's life and character. The things they are full of, are concerning Jesus of Nazareth, so he was commonly called, who was a prophet, a teacher come from God; he preached a true and excellent doctrine, which had manifestly its rise from heaven, and its tendency towards heaven; he confirmed it by many glorious miracles, miracles of mercy, so that he was mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, i. e. He was both a mighty favourite of heaven and a mighty blessing to this earth. He was, and appeared to be greatly beloved of God, and much the darling of his people. He had great acceptance with God, and a great reputation in the country. Many are great before all the people, and are carested by them, who are not so before God, as the Scribes and Pharisees, but Christ was mighty both in his doctrine and in his doings, before God and all the people. Those were strangers in Jerusalem that did not know this.

(2.) Here is a modest narrative of his sufferings and death, *ver.* 20. Though he was so dear both to God and man, yet the chief priests and our rulers, in contempt of both, delivered him to the Roman power to be condemned to death, and they have crucified him. It is strange they did not aggravate the matter more, and lay more load upon those that had been guilty of crucifying Christ; but perhaps because they spoke to one that was a stranger they thought it prudence to avoid all reflections upon the chief priests and their rulers, how just soever.

(3.) Here

(3.) Here is an intimation of their disappointment in him, as the reason of their sadness; *we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel*, ver. 21. We are of those, who not only looked upon him to be a prophet, like Moses, but like him a redeemer too; he was depended upon, and great things expected from him by them that *looked for redemption*, and in it for the consolation of Israel. Now, if *hope deferred maketh the heart sick*, hope disappointed, especially such a hope, kills the heart dead. But see how they made that the ground of their despair, which if they had understood it aright, was the surest ground of their hope, and that was the dying of the Lord Jesus: *We trusted (say they) that it had been he that should have redeemed Israel*: And is it not he that doth redeem Israel? Nay is he not by his death paying the price of their redemption, was it not necessary in order to his saving Israel from their sins, that he should suffer? So that now that most difficult part of his undertaking was got over, they had more reason than ever to *trust*, that *this is he that shall deliver Israel*; yet now they are ready to give up the cause.

(1.) There is an account of their present amazement with reference to his resurrection. (1.) *This is the third day since he was crucified and died*, and that was the day, when it was expected, if ever, that he should rise again, and rise in glory and outward pomp, and shew himself as publicly in honour as he had been shewn three days before in disgrace; but we see no sign of it; nothing appears as we expected to the conviction and confusion of his persecutors, and the consolation of his disciples, but all is silent. (2.) They own that there was a report among them that he was risen, but they seem to speak of it very slightly, and as what they gave no credit at all to, ver. 22, 23. *Certain women also of our company made us astonished*, and that was all which were *early at the sepulchre*, and found the body gone, and they said they had *seen a vision of angels*, which said he was alive; but we are ready to think it was only their fancy, and no real thing, for angels would have been sent to the apostles, not to the women, and women are easily imposed upon. (3.) They acknowledge that some of the apostles had made a visit to the sepulchre, and found it empty, ver. 24. but *him they saw not*, and therefore we have reason to fear that he is not risen, for if he were, surely he would have shewed himself to them. So that upon the whole matter, we have no great reason to think that he is risen, and therefore have no expectations from him now; our hopes were all nailed to his cross, and buried in his grave.

(5.) Our Lord Jesus, though not known by face to them, makes himself known to them by his word.

(1.) He reproves them for their incogitancy, and the weakness of their faith in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, ver. 25. *O fools, and slow of heart to believe*: When Christ forbade us to say to our brother *thou fool*, it was intended to restrain us from giving unreasonable reproaches, not from giving just reproofs. Christ called them *fools*, not as it signifies *wicked men* in which sense he forbade it us, but as it signifies *weak men*. He might call them *fools* for he *knows our foolishness*, the foolishness that is bound in our hearts. They are fools that act against their own interest, so they did, who would not admit the evidence given them that their Master was risen, but put away the comfort of it. That which is condemned in them as their *foolishness*, is, (1.) *Their slowness to believe*. Believers are branded as fools by atheists and infidels and free-thinkers, and their most holy faith censured as a fond credulity; but Christ tells us, that those are *fools* who are *slow of heart to believe*, and are kept from it by prejudices never impartially examined. (2.) *Their slowness to believe the writings of the prophets*. He doth not so much blame them for their slowness to believe the testimony of the women and of the angels, but for that which was the cause thereof, their *slowness to believe the prophets*; for if they had given the prophets of the Old Testament their due weight and consideration, they would have been as sure of Christ's rising from the dead that morning being the third day after his death, as they were of the rising of the sun; for the *series and succession of events* as it is settled by prophecy, is no less certain and inviolable than as it is settled by providence; were we but more *conversant* with the scripture, and the divine counsels as far as they are made known in the scripture, we should not be subject to such perplexities as we often *intangle* ourselves in.

(2.) He shews them that the sufferings of Christ, which were such a stumbling-block to them, and made them unapt to believe his glory, were really the appointed way to his glory, and he could not go to it any other way, ver. 26. *Ought not the Christ, (the Messiah) to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?* Was it not decreed, and was not that decree declared, that the promised Messiah must first suffer, and then reign? that he must go by his cross to his crown? Had they never read the fifty-third of Isaiah, and the ninth of Daniel, where the prophets speak to very plainly of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, 1 Pet. i. 11. The cross of Christ was it, that they could not reconcile themselves to; now here he shews them two things, which take off the offence of the cross; (1.) That the Messiah *ought to suffer* these things; and therefore his sufferings were not only no objection against his being the Messiah, but really a proof of it, as the affliction of the saints are an evidence of their sonship; and they were so far from ruining their expectations, that really they were the foundation of their hopes. He could not have been a *farour*, if he had not been a *sufferer*. Christ's undertaking our salvation was voluntary, but having undertaken it, it was necessary he should suffer and die. (2.) That when he had suffered these things, he should *enter into his glory*; which he did at his resurrection, that was his first step upwards. Observe, It is called *his glory*; because he was *duly entitled* to it; and it was the glory he had before the world was: he ought to enter into it, for in that as well as in his sufferings the scripture must be fulfilled. He *ought to suffer first*, and then to enter into his glory: and thus the reproach of the cross is for ever rolled away; and we are directed to expect the crown of thorns, and then that of glory.

(3.) He expounded to them the scriptures of the Old Testament, which spake of the Messiah, and shewed them how they were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, and now can tell them more concerning him, than they could before tell him, ver. 27. *beginning at Moses, the first inspired writer of the Old Testament*, he went in order through *all the prophets* and expounded to them *the things concerning himself*; shewing that the sufferings he had now gone through, were so far from defeating the prophecies of the scripture concerning him, that they were the accomplishment of them. He begun at Moses, who recorded the first promise, in which it was plainly foretold that the Messiah should have his *heel bruised*, but that by it the serpent's head should be incurably broken. Note, 1. There are things dispersed throughout *all the scriptures* concerning Christ, which it is of great advantage to have *collected and put together*. You cannot go so far in any part of scripture but you meet with something that has reference to Christ, some prophecy, some promise, some prayer, some type or other; for he is the true *treasure hid in the field* of the Old Testament. A golden throne of gospel grace runs through the whole web of the Old Testament. There is an eye of that *while* to be discerned in every place. 2. The things concerning Christ need to be *expounded*. The eunuch, though a scholar, would not pretend to understand them, except *some man should guide him*, Acts viii. 31.

for they were delivered darkly, according to their disposition: but now the veil is taken away, the New Testament expounds the Old. (3.) Jesus Christ is himself the best expositor of scripture, particularly the scripture concerning himself; and even after his resurrection, it was in this way that he led people into the knowledge of the mystery concerning himself; not by advancing new notions independent upon the scripture, but by shewing how the scripture was fulfilled, and turning them over to the study of them. Even the Apocalypse itself is but a second part of the Old Testament prophecies, and has continually an eye to them. *If men believe not Moses and the prophets*, they are incurable. (4.) In *studying* the scriptures it is good to be *methodical*, and to take them in order; for the Old Testament light shone *gradually* to the perfect day, and it is good to observe how at *undry times* and in *divers manners* (subsequent predictions improving and giving light to the preceding ones) God spake to the fathers concerning his Son, by whom he has now spoken to us. Some begin their Bible at the wrong end, that study the Revelation first, but Christ has here taught us to *begin at Moses*. Thus far the conference between them.

4. Here is the discovery which Christ at length made of himself to them. One would have given a great deal for a copy of the sermon Christ preached to them by the way, of that exposition of the Bible he gave them, but it is not thought fit we should have it, we have the substance of it in other scriptures; the disciples are so charmed with it, that they think they are come too soon to their journey's end; but so it is; *They drew nigh the village whither they went*, ver. 28. where it should seem they determined to take up for that night. And now,

1. They courted his stay with them. *He made as though he would have gone further*; he did not say he would, but he seemed to them to be going further, and did not readily turn in to their friend's house, which it would not be decent for a stranger to do unless he were invited; he would have gone further, if they had not courted his stay; so that here was nothing like dissimulation in the case. If a stranger be *shy*, every one knows the meaning of it, he will not thrust himself *rudely* upon your house or company, but if you make it appear that you are freely desirous of him for your guest or companion, he knows not but he may accept your invitation: and this was all that Christ did, when he *made as though he would have gone further*. Note, Those that would have Christ dwell with them, must invite him, and be importunate with him; though he is often found of those that seek him not, yet those only that seek can be sure to find; and if he seem to draw off from us it is but to draw out our importunity: as here, *they constrained him*; both of them laid hold of him, with a kind and friendly violence, saying *abide with us*. Note, Those that have experienced the pleasure and profit of communion with Christ, cannot but covet more of his company, and beg of him, not only to walk with them all day, but to *abide with them* at night. When the day is far spent, and it is towards evening, we begin to think of retiring for our repose, and then it is proper to have our eye to Christ, and beg of him to *abide with us*; to manifest himself to us, and to fill our minds with good thoughts of him, and good affections to him. Christ yielded to their importunity, he *went in to tarry with them*. Thus ready is Christ to give further instructions and comforts to those who improve what they have received. He has promised, that *if any man will open the door to bid him welcome he will come in to him*, Rev. iii. 20.

2. He manifested himself to them, ver. 30, 31. We may suppose he continued his discourse with them, which he began upon the road, for thou must talk of the things of God *when thou sittest in the house, as well as when thou walkest by the way*; while supper was a getting ready, which perhaps was soon done, the provision was so small and mean it is likely he entertained them with such communication as was good, and to the use of edifying; and so likewise as they *sat at meat*, his lips fed them. But till they little thought that it was Jesus himself that was all this while talking with them: till at length he was pleased to throw off his disguise, and then to withdraw.

1. They began to suspect it was he, when, as they *sat down to meat*, he undertook the office of the master of the feast, which he performed so like himself, and like what he used to do among his disciples, that by it they discerned him. He *took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them*. This he did with his usual air both of authority and affection, with the same gestures and mien, with the same expressions perhaps in crying a blessing, and in giving the bread to them. This was not a *miraculous* meal, like that of the five loaves, nor a *sacramental* meal, like that of the Eucharist, but a *common* meal, yet Christ here did the same as he did in those; to teach us to keep up our communion with God through Christ in common providences, as well as in special ordinances, and to crave a blessing and give thanks at every meal; and to see our daily bread provided for us, and broken to us by the hand of Jesus Christ, the master, not only of the great family, but of all our families. Wherever we sit down to eat, let us set Christ at the upper end of the table, take our meat as *blessed to us* by him, and eat and drink to his glory, and receive contentedly and thankfully what he is pleased to carve out to us, be the fare never so coarse and mean; we may well receive it cheerfully, if we can by faith see it coming to us from Christ's hand and with his blessing.

2. Presently *their eyes were opened*, and then they saw who it was, and knew him well enough: whatever it was which had hitherto concealed him from them, it was now taken out of the way, the mists were scattered, the veil taken off, and then they made no question but it was their master; he might for wife and holy ends put on the shape of another, but no other could put on his; and therefore it must be him. See how Christ by his Spirit and grace makes himself known to the souls of his people.

(1.) He opens the scriptures to them, for they are they which testify of him, to those who *search them*, and search for him in them. (2.) He meets them at his table in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and commonly there makes further discoveries of himself to them; is *known to them in the breaking of bread*: but, (3.) The work is completed by the opening of the eyes of their mind, and causing the scales to fall off from them, as from Paul's in his conversion. If he that gives the revelation do not give the understanding, we are in the dark still.

3. He immediately disappeared; he *vanished out of their sight*. *ἄφηντο*, *he withdrew himself* from them; slipped away of a sudden, and went out of sight. Or, he *became not visible by them*: was made inconspicuous from them. It should seem that though Christ's body after his resurrection was the very same body in which he suffered and died, as appeared by the marks in it, yet it was so far changed, as to become either *visible* or *not visible*, as he thought fit to make it, which was a step towards its being made a *glorious* body. As soon as he had given his disciples 'one glimpse of him he was gone presently; such short and transient views have we of Christ in this world, we see him, but in a little while lose the sight of him again, when we come to heaven the vision of him will have no interruption.

5. Here is the reflection which these disciples made upon this conference, and the report they made of it to their brethren at Jerusalem.

1. The reflection they each of them made upon the influence which Christ's discourse had upon them, ver. 32. *They said one to another, did not our*

our hearts burn within us? I am sure mine did, saith one; and so did mine, saith the other, I never was so affected with any discourse in all my life. Thus do they not so much compare notes as compare hearts, in review of the sermon Christ had preached to them. They found the preaching powerful, even when they knew not the preacher; it made things very plain and clear to them; and which was more, brought a divine heat with a divine light into their souls such as put their hearts into a glow, and kindled a holy fire of pious and devout affections in them. Now this they take notice of, for the confirming of their belief, that it was indeed, as at last they saw, *Jesus himself*, that had been talking with them all along, what fools were we that we were not sooner aware who it was? For none but he, no word but his, could make our hearts burn within us as they did, it must be he that has the key of the heart, it could be no other. See here, (1.) What preaching is likely to do good; such as Christ's was; plain preaching, and which is familiar and level to our capacity, he talked with us by the way; and scriptural preaching; he opened to us the scriptures, the scriptures relating to himself. Ministers should shew people their religion in their Bibles, and that they preach no other doctrine to them but what is there; must shew that they make that the fountain of their knowledge, and the foundation of their faith. Note, The expanding of those scriptures which speak of Christ, has a direct tendency to warm the hearts of his disciples, both to quicken them and to comfort them. (2.) What hearing is likely to do good, that which makes the heart burn, when we are much affected with the things of God, especially with the love of Christ in dying for us, and have our hearts thereby drawn out in love to him, and drawn up in holy desires and devotions, then our hearts burn within us, when our hearts are raised and elevated, and are as the sparks which fly upwards towards God, and when they are kindled and carried out with a holy zeal and indignation against sin, both in others and in ourselves, and we are in some measure refined and purified from it by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning, then we may say, through grace our hearts are thus inflamed.

2. The report they brought of this to their brethren at Jerusalem, ver. 33. They rise up the same hour, so transported with joy at this discovery Christ had made of himself to them, that they could not stay to make an end of their supper, but returned with all speed to Jerusalem, though it was towards evening. If they had had any thoughts of quitting their relation to Christ, this soon banished all such thoughts out of their mind, and there needed no more to send them back to his flock. However, it should seem they intended at least to take up their quarters to-night at Emmaus, but now they had seen Christ, they could not rest till they had brought the good news to the disciples, both for the confirmation of their trembling faith, and for the comfort of their sorrowful spirits, with the same comforts wherewith they were comforted of God. Note, It is the duty of those to whom Christ hath manifested himself, to let others know what he has done for their souls. When thou art converted, instructed, comforted, strengthen thy brethren. These disciples were full of this matter themselves, and must go to their brethren to give vent to their joys, as well as to give them satisfaction that their master was risen. Observe,

1. How they found them, just when they came in among them, discoursing on the same subject, and relating another proof of the resurrection of Christ. They found the eleven, and those that were their usual companions, gathered together late in the night, to pray together it may be, and to consider what was to be done in this juncture; and they found them saying among themselves (*ἀλλοιῶται*, it is the saying of the eleven, not of the two, as is plain by the original) and when these two came in they repeated to them with joy and triumph, *The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon*, ver. 34. That Peter had a sight of him, before the rest of the disciples had, appears 1 Cor. xv. 5. where it is said, *He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve*; the angel having ordered the women to tell Peter of it particularly, Mark xvi. 7. for his comfort, it is highly probable that our Lord Jesus did himself presently the same day appear to Peter, though we have no particular narrative of it to confirm the words of his messengers. This he had related to his brethren; but observe, Peter doth not here proclaim it and boast of it himself, he thought that did not become a penitent, but the other disciples speak of it with exultation, *The Lord is risen indeed, verily, really, it is now past dispute, no room is left to doubt it, for he has appeared not only to the women but to Simon*.

2. How they seconded their evidence with an account of what they had seen, ver. 35. They told what things were done in the way. The words that were spoken by Christ to them in the way, having a wonderful effect and influence upon them, are here called the things that were done in the way: for the words that Christ speaks are not an empty sound, but they are spirit, and they are life, and wondrous things are done by them, done by the way, by the way as it were, where it is not expected. They told also how he was at length known to them in the breaking of bread; then when he was carrying out blessings to them, God opened their eyes to discern who it was. Note, It would be of great use for the discovery and confirmation of truth, if the disciples of Christ would compare their observations and experiences, and communicate to each other what they know and have felt in themselves.

36. ¶ And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 37. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. 38. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? 39. Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. 40. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. 41. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? 42. And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey-comb. 43. And he took it, and did eat before them. 44. And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. 45. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures. 46. And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

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48. And ye are witnesses of these things. 49. ¶ And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high:

Five times Christ was seen the same day he rose; by Mary Magdalen alone in the garden, John xx. 14. by the women as they were going to tell the disciples, Matt. xxviii. 9. by Peter alone; by the two disciples going to Emmaus, and now at night by the eleven; which we have no account of in these verses, as also John xx. 19. Observe,

1. The great surprise which his appearing gave them. He came in among them very seasonably, as they were comparing notes concerning the proofs of his resurrection. As they thus spake, and were ready perhaps to put it to the question, whether the proofs produced amounted to evidence sufficient of their Master's resurrection or no, and how they should proceed; *Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and put it out of question*. Note, Those who make the best use they can of their evidences for their comfort may expect further assurances; and that the Spirit of Christ will witness with their spirits (as Christ here witnessed with the disciples, and confirmed their testimony) that they are the children of God, and risen with Christ. Observe, (1.) The comfort Christ spoke to them. *Peace be unto you*. This intimates in general that it was a kind visit which Christ now made them, a visit of love and friendship. Though they had very unkindly deserted him in his sufferings, yet he takes the first opportunity of seeing them together; for he deals not with us as we deserve. They did not credit those who had seen him, therefore he comes himself that they might not continue in their disconsolate incredulity. He had promised that after his resurrection he would see them in Galilee, but so desirous was he to see them and satisfy them, he anticipated the appointment and sees them at Jerusalem. Note, Christ is often better than his word, but never worse. Now his first word to them was, *Peace be to you*, not in a way of compliment but of consolation. This was a common form of salutation among the Jews, and Christ would thus express his usual familiarity with them, though he was now entered into his state of exaltation. Many when they are advanced forget their old friends and take state upon them, but we see Christ as free with them as ever. Thus Christ would at the first word intimate to them that he did not come to quarrel with Peter for denying him, and the rest for out-running him, no, he came peaceably, to signify to them that he had forgiven them, and was reconciled to them. (2.) The fright which they put themselves into upon it, ver. 37. They were terrified, supposing that they had seen a spirit, because he came in among them without any noise, and was in the midst of them ere they were aware. The word used, Matt. xiv. 26. when they said, *it is a spirit*, is *πνεῦμα*, it is a spectre, an apparition; but the word here used is *ψυχή*, the word that properly signifies a spirit; they supposed it to be a spirit not clothed with a real body. Though we have an alliance and correspondence with the world of spirits, and are harkening to it; yet while we are in this world of sense and matter, it is a terror to us to have a spirit so far change its own nature as to become visible to us, and conversable with us, for it is something, and bodes something very extraordinary.

2. The great satisfaction which his discourse gave them; wherein we have,

First, The reproof he gave them for their causeless fear, ver. 38. *Why are ye troubled, and why do frightful thoughts arise in your hearts?* Observe here, (1.) That when at any time we are troubled, thoughts are apt to rise in our hearts that do us hurt. Sometimes the trouble is the effect of the thoughts that arise in our hearts, our griefs and fears take rise from those things which are the creatures of our own fancy; sometimes the thoughts arising in the heart are the effect of the trouble; without are fightings, and then within are fears. Those that are melancholy and troubled in mind have thoughts arising in their hearts, which reflect dishonour upon God, and create disquiet to themselves. *I am cut off from thy sight. The Lord has forsaken and forgot me*.

(2.) That many of the troublesome thoughts with which our minds are disquieted arise from our mistakes concerning Christ; they here thought they had seen a spirit, when they saw Christ, and that put them into this fright; we forget that Christ is our elder brother, and look upon him to be at as great a distance from us as the world of spirits is from this world, and therefore terrify ourselves. When Christ is by his Spirit convincing and humbling us, when he is by his providence trying and converting us, we mistake him, as if he designed our hurt, and that troubles us.

(3.) That all the troublesome thoughts which rise in our hearts at any time are known to the Lord Jesus, even at the first rise of them; and they are displeasing to him. He chid his disciples for such thoughts, to teach us to chide ourselves for them. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? why art thou troubled? why do thoughts arise that are neither true nor good, that have neither foundation nor fruit, but hinder our joy in God, disfit us for our duty, give advantage to Satan, and deprive us of the comforts laid up for us?*

Secondly, The proof he gave them of his resurrection, both for the silencing of their fears, by convincing them that he was not a spirit; and for the strengthening of their faith in that doctrine which they were to preach to the world, by giving them a full satisfaction concerning his resurrection, which if not true, their faith and preaching was all in vain. Two proofs he gives them.

1. He shews them his body, particularly his hands and his feet. They saw that he had the shape and features and exact resemblance of their Master, but is it not his ghost? No, saith Christ, *Behold my hands and my feet, you see I have hands and feet, and therefore have a true body*; you see I can move these hands and feet, and therefore have a living body; and you see the marks of the nails in my hands and feet, and therefore it is my own body, is the same that you saw crucified, and not a borrowed one. He lays down this principle, that a spirit has not flesh and bones, it is not compounded of gross matter, shaped into various members, and consisting of divers heterogeneous parts, as our bodies are; he doth not tell us what a spirit is, it is time enough to know that when we go to the world of spirits, but what it is not, it has not flesh and bones. Now hence he infers, *it is I myself*; whom you have been so intimately acquainted with, and have had such familiar conversation with; it is I myself, whom you have reason to rejoice in and not to be afraid of. Those who know Christ aright, and know him as theirs, will have no reason to be terrified at his appearances, at his approaches.

He appeals to their sight, shews them his hands and his feet, which were pierced with the nails; Christ retained the marks of them in his glorified body, that they might be proofs that it was he himself, and he was willing they should be seen; he afterwards shewed them to Thomas, for he is not ashamed of his sufferings for us; little reason then have we to be ashamed of them or of ours for him. As he shewed his wounds here to his disciples for the enforcing of his instructions to them, so he shewed them to his Father, for the enforcing of his intercessions with him. He appears in heaven as a Lamb that has been slain, Rev. v. 6. his blood speaks, Heb.

xii. 24. He makes intercession in the virtue of his satisfaction ; he saith to the Father, as here to the disciples, *Behold my hands, and my feet, Zech. xiii. 6, 7.*

He appeals to their *touch*. *Handle me, and see.* He would not let Mary Magdalen touch him at that time, *John xx. 17.* But the disciples here are entrusted to do it, that they who were to preach his resurrection, and to suffer for doing so, might be themselves abundantly satisfied concerning it. He bid them *handle him*, that they might be convinced that he was not a *spirit*. If there were really no spirits or apparitions of spirits, as by this and other instances it is plain the disciples did believe there were ; now had been a proper time for Christ to have undeceived them, by telling them there were no such things ; but he seems to take it for granted that there have been and may be apparitions of spirits, else what needed so much pains to prove that he was not one ? There were many heretics in the primitive times, atheists I rather think they were, who said that Christ had never any substantial body, but that it was a meer phantasm, which was neither really born nor truly suffered ; such wild notions as these, we are told, the Valentinians and Manichees had, and the followers of Simon Magus ; they were called *Δοκίται* and *Φαντασισταί*. Blessed be God these heresies are long since buried ; and we know and are sure that Jesus Christ was no *spirit* or *apparition*, but had a true and real body, even after his resurrection.

2. He *eats* with them, to shew that he had a real and true body, and that he was willing to converse freely and familiarly with his disciples, as one friend with another. St. Peter lays a great stress upon this, *Acts x. 41.* *We did eat and drink with him, after he rose from the dead.*

1. When they *saw his hands and his feet*, yet they knew not what to say. *They believed not for joy, and wondered,* ver. 41. It was their infirmity that they believed not, that yet they believed not, *ἐν ἀπιστίᾳ ἔσταν*, they *as yet* being unbelievers. This very much corroborates the truths of Christ's resurrection, that the disciples were so slow to believe it. Instead of stealing away his body, and saying, *he is risen*, when he is not, as the chief priests suggested they would do, they are ready to say again and again, *he is not risen*, when he is. Their being incredulous of it at first, and insisting upon the utmost proofs of it, shews, that when afterwards they did believe it, and venture their all upon it, it was not but upon the fullest demonstration of the thing that could be.

But though it was their infirmity, yet it was an excusable one ; for it was not from any attempt of the evidence offered them that they believed not : But, (1.) *They believed not for joy*, as Jacob, when he was told that Joseph was alive ; they thought it too good news to be true. When the faith and hope are therefore *weak*, because the love and desires are *strong*, that weak faith shall be helped and not rejected. (2.) *They wondered*, they thought it not only *too good*, but *too great* to be true, forgetting both the scriptures and the power of God.

2. For their further conviction and encouragement, he *called for some meat*. He sat down to meat with the two disciples at Emmaus, but it is not said that he did eat with them ; now lest that should be made an objection, he here did actually *eat with them and the rest*, to shew that his body was really and truly *returned to life* ; though he did not eat and drink, and converse constantly with them as he had done (and as Lazarus did after his resurrection, who not only returned to life, but to his former state of life), and to die again ; because it was not agreeable to the economy of that state he was risen to.

They gave him a *piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey-comb*, ver. 42. The honey comb, perhaps, was used as sauce to the broiled fish, for Canaan was a land *flowing with honey*. This was mean fare, yet if it be fare of the disciples, their Master will fare as they do ; because in the kingdom of our Father they shall fare as he does, shall eat and drink with him in his kingdom.

Thirdly, The *insight* he gave them into the word of God, which they had heard and read, by which faith in the resurrection of Christ is wrought in them, and all the difficulties cleared.

1. He refers them to the *word* which they had heard from him, when he was with them, and puts them in mind of that as the angel had done, ver. 44. *These are the words which I said unto you in private many a time while I was yet with you.* We should better understand what Christ doth if we did but better remember what he hath said, and had but the art of comparing them together.

2. He refers them to the *word* they had read in the Old Testament, which the word they had heard from him directed them to. *All things must be fulfilled which were written.* Christ had given them this general hint for the regulating of their expectations, that whatever they found written concerning the Messiah, in the Old Testament, must be fulfilled in him ; what was written concerning his sufferings, as well as what was written concerning his kingdom, those God had *joined together* in the prediction, and it could not be thought they should be *put asunder* in the event. *All things must be fulfilled*, even the *hardest*, even the *heaviest*, even the *vinegar* ; he could not die till he had that, because he could not till then say, *It is finished*. The several parts of the Old Testament are here mentioned, as containing each of them concerning Christ : *The law of Moses*, i. e. the Pentateuch, or the five books written by Moses ; the *prophets*, containing not only the books that are purely prophetic, but those historical books that were written by prophetic men. The *Psalms* contain also the other writings, which they called the *Hagiographa*. See in what various ways of writing God did of old reveal his will ; but all proceeded from one and the self-same Spirit, who by them gave notice of the coming and kingdom of the Messiah ; for *to him bare all the prophets witness*.

3. By an immediate present work upon their minds, which they themselves could not but be sensible of ; he gave them to apprehend the true intent and meaning of the Old Testament prophecies of Christ, and to see them all fulfilled in him, ver. 45. *Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the scriptures.* In his discourse with the two disciples he took the veil from off the text, by opening the scriptures, here he took the veil from off the heart, by opening the mind. Observe here, (1.) That Jesus Christ by his Spirit operates on the minds of men, on the minds of all that are his : He has access to our spirits, and can immediately influence them. It is observable, how he did now after his resurrection give a specimen of those two great operations of his Spirit upon the spirits of men ; his enlightening the intellectual faculties with a divine light, when he opened the understandings of his disciples, and his invigorating of the active powers with a divine heat, when he made their hearts burn with them. (2.) Even good men need to have their *understandings opened* ; for though they are not *darkness*, as they were by nature, yet in many things they are *in the dark*. David prays, *Open mine eyes. Give me understanding.* And St. Paul, that knows so much of Christ, sees his need to learn more. (3.) Christ's way of working faith in the soul, and gaining the throne there, is by opening the understanding to discern the evidence of those things that are to be believed. Thus he comes into the soul by the *door*, while Satan as a thief and a robber climbs up some other way. (4.) The design of opening the understanding is, *that we may understand the scriptures* ; not that we may be

wise above what is written, but that we may be wiser in what is written and may be made wise to salvation by it. The Spirit in the word and the Spirit in the heart say the same thing. Christ's scholars never learn *above their Bibles* in this world ; but they need to be learning still more and more *out of their Bibles*, and to grow more ready and mighty in the scriptures. That we may have right thoughts of Christ, and our mistakes concerning him rectified, there needs no more but to be made to understand the scriptures.

Fourthly, The instructions he gave them as apostles, who were to be employed in setting up his kingdom in the world. They expected, while their Master was with them, that they should be preferred to posts of honour, which they thought themselves quite disappointed of when he was dead : No, saith he, you are now to enter upon them, *Ye are to be witnesses of these things*, ver. 48. to carry the notice of them to all the world ; not only to report them as matters of news, but to assert them, as evidence given upon the trial of the great cause that has been so long depending between God and Satan, the issue of which must be, the casting down and casting out of the prince of this world. You are fully assured of these things yourselves, you are eye and ear-witnesses of them, go and assure the world of them and the same Spirit that has enlightened you, shall go along with you for the enlightening of others. Now here they are told,

1. *What they must preach* ; they must preach the gospel, must preach the *New Testament* as the full accomplishment of the *Old*, as the continuation and conclusion of divine revelation. They must take their Bibles along with them (especially when they preached to the Jews ; nay, and Peter in his first sermon to the Gentiles, directed them to consult the prophets, *Acts x. 43.*) and must shew people how it was written of old concerning the Messiah, and the glories and graces of his kingdom, and then must tell them, how upon their certain knowledge all this was fulfilled in the Lord Jesus.

(1.) The great gospel truth concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ must be published to the children of men, ver. 40. *Thus it was written* in the sealed book of the divine counsels from eternity, the volume of that book of the covenant of redemption ; and thus it was written in the open book of the Old Testament, among the things revealed, and therefore *thus it behoved Christ to suffer*, for the divine counsels must be performed, and care taken that no word of God fall to the ground. Go and tell the world, (1.) That Christ suffered as it was written of him. Go preach Christ crucified, be not ashamed of his cross, nor ashamed of a suffering Jesus. Tell them what he suffered, and why he suffered, and how all the scriptures of the Old Testament were fulfilled in his suffering. Tell them that it behoved him to suffer, that it was necessary to the taking away of the sin of the world, and the deliverance of mankind from death and ruin : nay, it became him to be perfected through sufferings, Heb. ii. 10. (2.) That he rose from the dead on the third day, by which not only all the offence of the cross was rolled away, but he was declared to be the Son of God with power, and in this also the scriptures were fulfilled, see 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. Go tell the world how often you saw him after he rose from the dead, and how intimately you conversed with him : *Your eyes see* (as Joseph said to his brethren, when his discovering of himself to them was as life from the dead) *that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you*, Gen. xiv. 12. Go and tell them then, that he that was dead is alive, and lives for evermore, and has the keys of death and the grave.

(2.) The great gospel duty of repentance must be pressed upon the children of men. Repentance for sin must be preached in Christ's name, and by his authority, ver. 47. *All men every where must be called and commanded to repent*, Acts xviii. 30. Go and tell people that the God that made them, and the Lord that bought them, expects and requires that immediately upon this notice given they turn from the worship of the gods they have made, to the worship of the God that made them ; and not only so, but from serving the interests of the world and the flesh, they must turn to the service of God in Christ ; must mortify all sinful habits, and forsake all sinful practices. Their hearts and lives must be changed, and they must be universally renewed and reformed.

(3.) The great gospel privilege of the remission of sins must be proposed to all, and assured to all that repent and believe the gospel. Go tell a guilty world that stands convicted and condemned at God's bar, that there is an act of indemnity passed the royal assent, which all that repent and believe shall have the benefit of, and not only be pardoned but preferred by. Tell them there is hope concerning them.

2. To whom they must preach : whither must they carry these proposals, and how far does their commission extend. They are here told, (1.) That they must preach this among all nations. They must disperse themselves like the sons of Noah after the flood, some one way and some another, and carry this light along with them wherever they went. The prophets had preached repentance and remission to the Jews, but the apostles must preach them to all the world. None are exempted from the obligation the gospel lays upon men to repent, nor are any excluded from those inestimable benefits which are included in the remission of sins, but those that by their unbelief and impenitency put a bar in their door.

(2.) That they must begin at Jerusalem : There they must preach their first gospel sermon ; there the gospel church must be first formed ; there the gospel-day must dawn, and thence that light shall go forth, which must take hold on the ends of the earth. And why must they begin there ? (1.) Because thus it was written, and therefore it behoved them to take this method *The word of the Lord must go forth from Jerusalem*, Isa. ii. 3. And see Joel ii. 32.—iii. 16. Obad. 21. Zech. xiv. 8. (2.) Because there the matters of fact, on which the gospel was founded, were transacted ; and therefore where they were first attested, where if there had been any just cause for it, they might be best contested and disproved. So strong, so bright is the first shining forth of the glory of the risen Redeemer, that it dares face those daring enemies of his that had put him to an ignominious death, and sets them at defiance. Begin at Jerusalem, that the chief priests may try their strength to crush the gospel, and may rage to see themselves disappointed. (3.) Because he would give us a farther example of forgiving enemies. Jerusalem had put the greatest affronts imaginable upon him, both the rulers and the multitude, for which that city might justly have been exempted by name out of the act of indemnity : No, so far from that, the first offer of gospel grace is made to Jerusalem, and thousands there are in a little time brought to partake of that grace.

3. What assistance they should have in preaching ; it is a vast undertaking they are here called to, a very large and difficult province, especially considering the opposition this service would meet with, and the sufferings it would be attended with : if therefore they ask, *Who is sufficient for these things ?* Here is an answer ready, ver. 49. *Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you, and ye shall be endued with power from on high.* He here assures them that in a little time the Spirit should be poured out upon them in greater measure than ever, and they should thereby be furnished with all those gifts and graces which were necessary to their discharge of this great trust ; and therefore they must tarry at Jerusalem, and not enter upon it till this be done. Note, 1. Those who receive the Holy Ghost, are thereby

endued with a power from on high, a supernatural power; a power above any of their own: it is from on high, and therefore draws the soul upward, and makes it to aim high. 2. Christ's apostles could never have planted his gospel, and set up his kingdom in the world as they did, if they had not been endued with such a power, and their admirable achievements prove that there was an excellency of power going along with them. (3.) This power from on high was the promise of the Father, the great promise of the New Testament, as the promise of the coming of Christ was of the Old Testament. And if it be the promise of the Father we may be sure that the promise is inviolable, and the thing promised invaluable. (4.) Christ would not leave his disciples till the time was just at hand for the performing of this promise. It was but ten days after the ascension of Christ that there came the descent of the Spirit. (5.) Christ's ambassador's must stay till they have their powers, and not venture upon their embassy till they have received full instructions and credentials, though one would think never was such haste as now for the preaching of the gospel, yet the preachers must tarry till they be endued with power from on high, and tarry at Jerusalem, though a place of danger, because there this promise of the Father was to find them, Joel ii. 28.

50. ¶ And he led them out as far as to Bethany: and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. 51. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. 52. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: 53. And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

This evangelist omits the solemn meeting between Christ and his disciples in *Galilee*; but what he said to them there, and at other interviews, he tacks to what he said to them at the first visit he made them on the evening of the day he rose; and has now nothing more to account for but his ascension into heaven, which we have a very brief narrative of in these verses: in which we are told,

First, How solemnly Christ took leave of his disciples: Christ's design being to reconcile heaven and earth, and continue a days-man between them, it was necessary he should lay his hands on them both, and in order thereunto that he should pass and repass: He had business to do in both worlds, and accordingly came from heaven to earth in his incarnation, to dispatch his business here, which when he had finished, he returned to heaven to reside there, and negotiate our affairs with the Father: Observe,

1. From whence he ascended; from Bethany, near Jerusalem, adjoining to the mount of Olives. There he had done eminent services for his Father's glory, and there he entered upon his glory. There was the garden in which his sufferings began, there he was in his agony, and Bethany signifies the house of sorrow: Those that would go to heaven must ascend thither from the house of sufferings and sorrow, must go by agonies to their joys. The mount of Olives was pitched upon long since to be the place of Christ's ascension, Zech. xiv. 4. His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives. And here it was that a while ago he began his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, chap. xiv. 29.

2. Who were the witnesses of his ascension: He led out his disciples to see him: probably it was very early in the morning that he ascended, before people were stirring, for he never shewed himself openly to all the people after his resurrection, but only to chosen witnesses. The disciples did not see him rise out of the grave, because his resurrection was capable of being proved by their seeing him alive afterwards: but they saw him ascend into heaven, because they could not otherwise have an ocular demonstration of his ascension. They were led out on purpose to see him ascend; had their eye upon him when he ascended, and were not looking another way.

3. What was the farewell he gave them. He lift up his hands, and blessed them. He did not go away in displeasure but in love, he left a blessing behind him; He lift up his hands, as the high-priest did when he blessed the people, see Lev. ix. 22. He blessed as one having authority; commanded the blessing which he had purchased; he blessed them as Jacob blessed his sons. The apostles were now as the representatives of the twelve

tribes, so that in blessing them he blessed all his spiritual Israel, and put his Father's name upon them. He blessed them as Jacob blessed his sons, and Moses the tribes at parting, to shew that having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

4. How he left them, while he was blessing them he was parted from them, not as if he were taken away before he had said all he had to say, but to intimate that his being parted from them did not put an end to his blessing of them, for the intercession which he went to heaven to make for all his, is a continuation of that blessing: He began to bless them on earth, but he went to heaven to go on with it. Christ was now sending his apostles to preach his gospel to the world, and he gives them his blessing, not for themselves only, but to be conferred in his name upon all that should believe on him through their word, for in him all the families of the earth were to be blessed.

5. How his ascension is described. (1.) He was parted from them, was taken from their head, as Elijah from Elisha's. Note, the dearest friends must part. Those that love us, and pray for us, and instruct us, must be parted from us. The bodily presence of Christ himself was not to be expected always in this world; those that knew him after the flesh must now henceforth know him so no more. (2.) He was carried up into heaven; not by force, but by his own act and deed. As he arose, so he ascended by his own power, yet attended by angels. There needed no chariot of fire, or horses of fire, he knew the way, and being the Lord from heaven could go back himself. He ascended in a cloud, as the angel in the smoke of Noah's sacrifice, Judges xiii. 20.

Secondly, How cheerful his disciples continued their attendance on him, and on God through him, even now he was parted from them.

1. They paid their homage to him at his going away, to signify, that though he was going into a far country, yet they would continue his loyal subjects that were willing to have him reign over them. They worshipped him, ver. 52. Note, Those that receive blessings from Christ he expects adoration from them. He blessed them, in token of gratitude for which they worshipped him. This fresh display of Christ's glory, drew from them fresh acknowledgements and adorations of of it. They knew that though he was parted from them, yet he could and did take notice of their adorations of him; the cloud that received him out of their sight, did not put them or their services out of his sight.

2. They returned to Jerusalem with great joy. There they were ordered to continue till the Spirit should be poured out upon them, and thither they went accordingly, though it was into the mouth of danger. Thither they went, and there they staid with great joy. This was a wonderful change, and an effect of the opening of their understandings. When Christ told them he must leave them, sorrow filled their hearts; yet now they see him go, they are filled with joy, being convinced at length that it was expedient for them and for the church that he should go away to send the Comforter. Note, The glory of Christ is the joy, the exceeding joy of all true believers, even while they are here in this world; much more will it be so when they go to the new Jerusalem and find him there in his glory.

3. They abounded in acts of devotion while they were in expectation of the promise of the father, ver. 53. (1.) They attended the temple service at the hours of prayer; God had not as yet quite forsaken it, and therefore they did not. They were continually in the temple, as their master was when he was at Jerusalem. The Lord loves the gates of Zion, and so should we. Some think they had their place of meeting as disciples in some of the chambers of the temple which belonged to some Levite that was well affected to them; but others think it is not likely that either could be concealed from, or would be connived at by the chief priests and rulers of the temple. (2.) Temple sacrifices they knew were superseded by Christ's sacrifice, but the temple songs they joined in. Note, While we are waiting for God's promises we must go forth to meet them with our praises. Praising and blessing God is work that is never out of season; and nothing doth better prepare the mind for the receiving of the Holy Ghost than holy joy and praise. Fears are silenced, sorrows sweetened and allayed, and hopes kept up.

The amen that concludes seems to be added by the church and every believer to the reading of the gospel; signifying an assent to the truths of the gospel, and a hearty concurrence with all the disciples of Christ in praising and blessing God. Amen. Let him be continually praised and blessed.

THE END OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE.

AN
E X P O S I T I O N,
WITH
P R A C T I C A L O B S E R V A T I O N S,

Of the GOSPEL according to

St. J O H N.

IT is not material to enquire when and where this gospel was written; we are sure it was given by inspiration of God to John, the brother of James, one of the twelve apostles, distinguished by the honourable character of *that disciple whom Jesus loved*; one of the first three of the worthies of the Son of David, whom he took to be the witnesses of his retirements, particularly of his transfiguration and agony. The ancients tell us, that John lived longest of all the twelve apostles, and was the only one of them that died a natural death, all the rest suffering martyrdom; and some of them say he wrote this gospel at Ephesus, at the request of the ministers of the several churches of Asia, in opposition to the heresy of Cerinthus and the Ebionites, who held that our Lord was a mere man. It seems most-probably that he wrote it before his banishment into the isle of Patmos, for there he wrote his *Apocalypse*, the close of which seems designed for the closing up of the canon of scripture; and if so, this gospel was not written after. I cannot therefore give credit to those later fathers, who say he wrote it in his banishment or after his return from it, many years after the destruction of Jerusalem; when he was ninety years old, faith one of them; when he was an hundred faith another of them. However, it is clear he wrote last of the four evangelists, and comparing his gospel with theirs, we may observe, (1.) That he *relates* what they had omitted; he *brings up the rear*, and his gospel is as the *rearward* or *gathering-host*, it gleans up what they had passed by. Thus there was a later collection of Solomon's wise sayings, *Prov.* xxv. 1, and yet far short of what he delivered, *1 Kings* iv. 32. (2.) That he gives us more of the *mystery* of that, which the other evangelists gave us only the *history* of. It was necessary that the matters of fact should be first settled, which was done in their *declarations of those things which Jesus began to do and teach*, *Luke* i. 1. *Acts* i. 1. But that being done out of the mouth of two or three witnesses, *John goes on to perfection*, *Heb.* vi. 1. *not laying again the foundation*, but building upon it; leading us more within the veil. Some of the ancients observe that the other evangelists wrote more of the *τὰ σαρκικά*, the bodily things of Christ; but John writes of the *τὰ πνευματικά*, the spiritual things of the gospel, the life and soul of it; therefore some have called this gospel the *key of the evangelists*. Here it is that a *door is opened in heaven*, and the first voice we hear is, *Come up hither*; come up higher. Some of the ancients, that supposed the four living creatures in John's vision to represent the four evangelists, make John himself to be the *flying-eagle*; so high doth he *soar*, and so clearly doth he *see* into divine and heavenly things.

C H A P. I.

The scope and design of this chapter is to confirm our faith in Christ as the eternal Son of God, and the true Messiah and Saviour of the world, that we may be brought to receive him, and rely upon him, as our prophet, priest and king, and to give up ourselves to be ruled, and taught, and saved by him. In order to this, we have here, (1.) An account given of him by the inspired penman himself, fairly laying down in the beginning, what he designed his whole book should be the proof of, *ver.* 2—5. And again, *ver.* 10—14. And again, *ver.* 16, 17, 18. (2.) The testimony of John Baptist concerning him, *ver.* 6—9. And again, *ver.* 15. But most fully and particularly, *ver.* 19—37. (3.) His own manifestation of himself to Andrew and Peter, *ver.* 38—42. to Philip and Nathaniel, *ver.* 43—51.

1. **I**N the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2. The same was in the beginning with God. 3. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Austin faith (*de Civitate Dei*, lib. x. cap. 29.) that his friend Simplicianus told him, he had heard a Platonic philosopher say, that these first verses of St. John's gospel were *worthy to be written in letters of gold*. The learned Francis Junius, in the account he gives of his own life, tells how he was in his youth infected with loose notions in religion, and by the grace of God was wonderfully recovered, by reading accidentally these verses in a Bible, which his father had designedly laid in his way; he faith, that he observed such a divinity in the argument, such an authority and majesty in the stile, that his flesh trembled, and he was struck into such an amazement, that for a whole day he scarce knew where he was or what he did, and from thence he dates the beginning of his being religious. Let us inquire what there is in those strong lines. The evangelist here lays down the great truth he is to prove, that Jesus Christ is God, one with the Father. Observe,

First, Who he speaks of. *The Word*, ὁ λόγος. This is an idiom peculiar to John's writings. See *1 John* i. 1. chap. v. 7. *Rev.* xix. 13. yet some think Christ is meant by *the Word*, *Acts* xx. 32. *Heb.* iv. 12. *Luke* i. 2.

The Chaldee paraphrase very frequently calls the Messiah *Memra*, the Word of Jehovah, and speaks of many things in the Old Testament, said to be done by the Lord, as done by that Word of the Lord; even the vulgar Jews were taught, that the Word of God was the same with God. The evangelist, in the close of his discourse, *ver.* 18. plainly tells us, why he calls Christ *the Word*, because he is the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, and has declared him. Word is two-fold; λόγος ἰδιόθετος, word conceived; and λόγος προφορετικός, word uttered. The λόγος ὁ ἰσὺς and ὁ λόγος, ratio and oratio.

1. There is the word conceived; that is, thought, which is the first and only immediate product and conception of the soul, all the operations of which are performed by thought, and it is one with the soul. And thus the second person in the Trinity is fitly called *the Word*; for he is the first be-

gotten of the Father; that eternal essential wisdom which the Lord possessed, as the soul doth its thought, in the beginning of his way, *Prov.* viii. 22. There is nothing we are more sure of than that we think; yet nothing we are more in the dark about than how we think; who can declare the generation of thought in the soul? Surely then the generations and births of the eternal mind, may well be allowed to be great mysteries of godliness, the bottom of which we cannot fathom, while yet we adore the depth.

2. There is the word uttered, and that is speech, the chief and most natural indication of the mind. And thus Christ is the Word, for by him God has in these days spoken to us, *Heb.* i. 1. and as directed us to hear him, *Matth.* xvii. 5. He has made known God's mind to us, as a man's word or speech make known his thoughts, as far as he pleaseth and no further. Christ is called that wonderful speaker, *Dan.* viii. 13. The speaker of things hidden and strange. He is the word speaking from God to us, and to God for us. John Baptist was the voice, but Christ the Word; being the Word, he is the truth, the amen, the faithful witness of the mind of God.

Secondly, What he faith of him, enough to prove beyond contradiction, that he is God. He asserts,

1. His existence in the beginning. In the beginning was the Word. This speaks his existence, not only before his incarnation, but before all time. The beginning of time, in which all creatures were produced and brought into being, found this eternal Word in being. The world was from the beginning, but the Word was in the beginning. Eternity is usually expressed by being before the foundation of the world. The eternity of God is so described, *Psal.* xc. 2. Before the mountains were brought forth. So *Prov.* viii. 23. The Word had a being before the world had a beginning. He that was in the beginning never begun, and therefore ever was *expressus*. So *Nonnus*.

2. His co-existence with the Father. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. Let none say, that when we invite them to Christ, we would draw them from God, for Christ is with God, and is God; it is repeated again, *ver.* 2. the same, the very same that we believe in and preach, was in the beginning with God, i. e. he was so from eternity. In the beginning the world was from God, as it was created by him, but the Word was with God, is even with him. The Word was with God, (1.) In respect of essence and substance: for the Word was God; a distinct person or subsistence, for he was with God, and yet the same in substance, for he was God, *Heb.* i. e. (2.) In respect of complacency and felicity; there was a glory and happiness which Christ had with God before the world was, *John* 17. 5. the Son infinitely happy in the enjoyment of his Father's bosom, and no less the Father's delight, the Son of his love, *Prov.* viii. 30. (3.) In respect of counsel and design. The mystery of man's redemption by this Word incarnate, was bid to God before all worlds, *Eph.* iii. 9. He that undertook to bring us to God (*1 Pet.* iii. 18.) was himself from eternity with God; so that this grand affair of man's reconciliation to God, was concerted between the Father and Son from eternity, and they understand one another perfectly well in it; *Zech.* vi. 13. *Matth.* xi. 27. He was by him as one brought up with him for this service, *Prov.* viii. 30. He was with God, and therefore is said to come forth from the Father.

3. His agency in making the world, *ver.* 3. This is here, (1.) Expressly asserted; All things were made by him. He was with God, not only so as to be acquainted with the divine counsels from eternity, but to be active in the divine operations in the beginning of time. Then was I by him, *Prov.* viii. 30. God made the world by a word, *Psal.* xxxiii. 6. and Christ was that Word. By him, not as a subordinate instrument, but as a co-ordinate agent, God made the world, *Heb.* i. 2. not as the workman cuts by his axe, but as the body sees by the eye. (2.) The contrary is denied. Without him was not any thing made that was made, from the highest angel

angel to the meanest worm? God the father did nothing without him in that work. Now, (1.) This proves that *he is God*, for he that *built all things is God*, Heb. iii. 4. The God of Israel often proved himself to be God with this, that he *made all things*, Isa. xl. 12—28. chap. xiii. 5. and see Jer. x. 11, 12. (2.) This proves the excellency of the Christian religion; the author and founder of it is the same, who was the author and founder of the world. How excellent must that constitution needs be, which derives its institution from him who is the fountain of all excellency! When we worship Christ we worship him, to whom the patriarchs gave honour as the Creator of the world, and on whom all creatures depend. (3.) This shews how well qualified he was for the work of our redemption and salvation; help was laid upon one that was mighty indeed, for it was laid upon him that made all things; and he is appointed the author of our bliss that was the author of our being.

4. The original of life and light that is in him, *ver. 4. In him was life.* This further proves that he is God, and every way qualified for his undertaking: for, (1.) He has *life in himself*; not only the *true God*, but the *living God*. God is life, he swears by himself, when he saith, *As I live*, (2.) All living creatures have their life in him; not only all the *matter* of the creation was *made* by him, but all the *life* too that is in the creation is derived from him, and supported by him. It was the word of God that produced the *moving creatures having life*, Gen. i. 20. Acts xvii. 25. He is that word by which man lives more than by bread, *Matth. iv. 4.* (3.) Reasonable creatures have their *light* from him; that *life*, which is the *light of men* comes from him. Life in man is something greater and nobler than it is in other creatures, it is *rational* and not merely *animal*; when man became a *living soul* his life was *light*, his capacities such as distinguished him from and dignified him above the beasts that perish: *The spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord*, and it was the eternal Word that lighted this candle. The light of reason, as well as the life of sense, is derived from him and depends upon him: This proves him fit to undertake our salvation; for life and light, spiritual and eternal life and light are the two great things that fallen man, who lies so much under the power of *death* and *darkness*, has need of. From whom may we better expect the light of divine revelation than from him, who gave us the light of human reason? and if when God gave us natural life, that life was in his Son, how readily should we receive the gospel-record, that he hath given us *eternal life*, and that *life* too is in his Son?

5. The manifestation of him to the children of men. It might be objected, if this eternal Word was all in all thus in the creation of the world, whence is it that he has been so little taken notice of and regarded? To this he answers, *ver. 5. The light shines, but the darkness comprehends it not.* Observe,

1. The discovery of the eternal Word to the lapsed world even before he was manifested in the flesh. *The light shineth in darkness.* Light is self-evidencing, and will make itself known; this light, from whence the light of men comes, hath shined, and doth shine. (1.) The eternal Word, as *God* shines in the darkness of *natural conscience*. Though men by the fall are become *darkness*, yet that which may be known of God is manifested in them; see *Rom. i. 19, 20.* The light of nature is this light shining in darkness. Something of the power of the divine word, both as *creating* and as *commanding* all mankind has an innate sense of; were it not for that this earth would be a hell, a place of *utter darkness*; blessed be God it is not so yet. (2.) The eternal Word, as Mediator, shone in the darkness of the Old Testament types and figures, and the prophecies and promises which were of the Messiah from the beginning. He that had commanded the light of this world to shine out of darkness, was himself long a light shining in darkness, there was a *vail* upon this light, *2 Cor. iii. 13.*

2. The disability of the degenerate world to receive this discovery; the *darkness comprehended it not*, the most of men received the grace of God in these discoveries in vain. (1.) The world of mankind *comprehended not* the natural light that was in their understandings, but became *vain in their imaginations* concerning the eternal God, and the eternal Word, *Rom. i. 21—27.* The darkness of error and sin overpowered and quite eclipsed this light. *God spoke once, yet twice, but man perceived it not*, Job xxxiii. 14. (2.) The Jews that had the light of the Old Testament, yet comprehended not Christ in it. As there was a vail upon Moses's face, so there was upon the people's hearts. In the *darkness* of the types and shadows the light shone, but such was the *darkness* of their understandings, that they could not see it. It was therefore requisite that Christ should come both to rectify the errors of the Gentile world, and to improve the truths of the Jewish church.

6. ¶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John, 7. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. 8. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. 10. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 11. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

The evangelist designs to bring in John Baptist, bearing an honourable testimony to Jesus Christ. Now in these verses, before he doth that,

First, He gives us some account of this witness he is about to produce. His name is *John*; which signifies *gracious*; his conversation was austere, but he was not the less *gracious*. Now,

1. We are here told concerning him in general that he was a *man sent of God*. The evangelist had said concerning Jesus Christ, that he was *with God*, and that he *was God*; but here concerning John, that he was a *man*, a mere man: God is pleased to speak to us by men like ourselves. John was a *great man*, but he was a man, a son of man, he was *sent from God*, he was God's messenger, so he is called, *Mal. iii. 1.* God gave him both his mission and his message, both his credentials and his instructions. John wrought no miracle, nor do we find that he had visions and revelations, but the strictness and purity of his life and doctrine, and the direct tendency of both to reform the world, and to revive the interests of God's kingdom among men, were plain indications that he was *sent of God*.

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2. We are here told what his office and business was, *ver. 7. The same came for a witness*, an eye-witness, a leading witness. He came *for a testimony*. The legal institutions had been long a testimony for God in the Jewish church, by them revealed religion was kept up: hence we read of the *tabernacle of the testimony*, the *ark of the testimony*, the *law and the testimony*; but now divine revelation is to be turned into another channel; now the testimony of *Christ* is the testimony of *God*, 1 Cor. i. 6. and ii. 1. Among the Gentiles God indeed had not *left himself without witness*, Acts xiv. 17. but the Redeemer had no testimonies borne him among them. There was a profound silence concerning him, till John Baptist came for a witness to him. Now observe,

(1.) The *matter* of his testimony, he came to *bear witness of the light*. Light is a thing which witnesseth for itself, and carries its own evidence along with it: But to those who shut their eyes against the light, it is necessary there should be those that bear witness to it. Christ's light needs not man's testimony, but the world's darkness doth. John was like the night watchman that goes round the town proclaiming the approach of the morning light to those that have closed their eyes, and are not willing themselves to observe it: or like that *watchman* that was set to tell those who asked *what of the night?* that the *morning comes*, and *if ye will inquire, inquire ye*; Isa. xxi. 11, 12. He was sent of God to tell the world that the long-looked for Messiah was now come, who should be a *light to lighten the Gentiles*, and the *glory of his people Israel*; and that dispensation at hand which would bring *life and immortality to light*.

(2.) The *design* of his testimony: *That all men through him might believe*, not in him but in *Christ*, whose way he was sent to *prepare*. He taught men to look through him, and pass through him to Christ; through the doctrine of repentance for sin to that of *faith in Christ*. He prepared men for the reception and entertainment of Christ and his gospel, by awakening them to a sight and sense of sin, and their eyes being thereby opened, they might be ready to admit those beams of divine light, which in the person and doctrine of the Messiah were now ready to shine in their faces. If they would but receive this *witness of man*, they would soon find that the *witness of God* was greater, 1 John v. 9. See *John x. 41.* Observe, It was designed that *all men* through him might believe, excluding none from the kind and beneficial influences of his ministry that did not exclude themselves, as multitudes did who *rejected the counsel of God against themselves*, and so *received the grace of God in vain*.

3. We are here cautioned not to mistake him for the *light*, who only came to bear witness to it, *ver. 8. He was not that light* that was expected and promised, but only was sent to bear witness of that great and ruling light. He was a *star*, like that which guided the wise men to Christ: A morning star, but he was not the *sun*; not the bridegroom, but a friend of the bridegroom; not the prince, but his harbinger. There were those who rested in John's baptism, and looked no farther, as those Ephesians, *Acts xix. 3.* To rectify whose mistake, the evangelist here, when he speaks very honourably of him, yet shews that he must vail to Christ. He was great as the *prophet of the Highest*, but not the *Highest* himself. Note, We must take heed of over-valuing ministers as well as of under-valuing them; they are not our lords, nor have they dominion over our faith, but ministers by whom we believe; stewards of our Lord's house, We must not give up ourselves by an implicit faith to their conduct, for they are not that light; but we must attend to and receive their testimony, for they are sent to *bear witness of that light*; so then let us esteem of them, and not otherwise. Had John pretended to be that *light* he had not been so much as a *faithful witness* of that light. Those who usurp the honour of Christ, forfeit the honour of being the servants of Christ: Yet John was very serviceable as a witness to the light, though he was not that light. Those may be of great use to us who yet shine with a *borrowed light*.

Secondly, Before he goes on with John's testimony, he returns to give us a farther account of this Jesus to whom John bore record. Having shewed in the beginning of the chapter the glories of his Godhead, he here comes to shew the graces of his incarnation, and his favours to man as mediator.

(1.) Christ was the *true light*, *ver. 9.* not as if John Baptist were a *false light*, but in comparison with Christ he was a very *small light*: Christ is that *great light* that deserves to be called so. Other lights are but figuratively and equivocally called so; Christ is the *true light*. The fountain of all knowledge and of all comfort must needs be the *true light*. He is the *true light*, and for proof of it he doth not refer us to the emanations of his glory in the invisible world, the beams with which he enlightens that, but to those rays of his light which are darted downwards, and with which this dark world of ours is enlightened. But how doth Christ *lighten every man that comes into the world*?

(1.) By his creating power he lightens every man with the light of reason; that life which is the light of men is from him; all the discoveries and directions of reason, all the comfort it gives us, and all the beauty is puts upon us, is from Christ.

(2.) By the publication of his gospel to all nations, he doth in effect *lighten every man*. John Baptist was a light, but he enlightened only Jerusalem and Judea, and the region round about Jordan, like a candle that enlightens one room: but Christ is the *true light*, for he is a *light to lighten the Gentiles*. His everlasting gospel is to be preached to *every nation and language*, *Rev. xiv. 6.* Like the sun which *lightens every man*, that will open his eyes and receive its light, *Psalm. xix. 6.* to which the preaching of the gospel is compared, *Rom. x. 18.* Divine revelation is not now to be confined as it had been to one people, but to be diffused to all people, *Matth. v. 15.*

(3.) By the operation of his Spirit and grace he *lighteth* all those that are *enlightened* to salvation: And those that are not enlightened by him perish in darkness. The *light of the knowledge of the glory of God* is said to be in the face of Jesus Christ, and is compared with that light which was at the beginning *commanded to shine out of darkness*, and which *lighteth every man that comes into the world*. Whatever light any man has, he is indebted to Christ for it, whether it be natural or supernatural.

2. Christ was in the world, *ver. 10.* He was in the world as the essential Word before his incarnation, upholding all things; but this speaks of his being in the world when he took our nature upon him and dwelt among us; see *John xvi. 28. I am come into the world.* The Son of the highest was here in this *lower world*; that *light* in this *dark world*; that *holy thing* in this sinful polluted world. He left a world of bliss and glory, and was here in this melancholy miserable world. He undertook to reconcile the world to God, and therefore was *in the world* to treat about it; and send that affair: to satisfy God's justice for the world, and discover God's favour to the world. He was in the world but not of it, and speaks with an air of triumph, when he can say, *Now I am no more in it*, *John xvii. 11.* The greatest honour that ever was put upon this world, which is so mean and inconsiderable a part of the universe, was, that the Son of God was once in the world; and as it should engage our affections to things above, that there Christ is, so it should reconcile us to our present abode in this world, that once Christ was *here*: He was in the world for a while, but it is spoken of as a thing past; and so it will be said of us shortly, *we were in*

the world. Oh, that when we are here no more, we may be where Christ is! Now observe here,

(1.) What reason Christ had to expect the most affectionate and respectful welcome possible into this world, for *the world was made by him*. Therefore he came to save a lost world, because it was a world of his own making. Why should not he concern himself to revive the light that was of his own kindling, to restore a life of his own infusing, and to renew the image that was originally of his own impressing. The world was *made by him*, and therefore ought to do in homage.

(2.) What cold entertainment he met with notwithstanding: *The world knew him not*. The great Maker; Ruler, and Redeemer of the world was in it, and few or none of the inhabitants of the world were aware of it. The *or knows his owner*, but the more brutish world did not; they did not own him, did not bid him welcome, because they did not *know him*; and they did not know him, because he did not make himself known in that way that they expected, in external glory and majesty: His kingdom came not *with observation*, because it was to be a kingdom of trial and probation. When he shall come as a judge the world shall *know him*.

3. He came to his own, ver. 11. not only to the world which was *his own*, but to the people of Israel, that were peculiarly *his own* above all people; of whom he came, among them he lived, and to them he was *first sent*. The Jews were at this time a mean despicable people, *the crown was fallen from their head*, yet in remembrance of the ancient covenant, as bad as they were, and as poor as they were, Christ was not ashamed to look upon them as his own. *Ta bidia, his own things*; not *tes bidia*, his own persons, as *true believers* are called, John xiii. 1. The Jews were *his*, as a man's house and lands and goods are *his*, which he useth and possesseth; but believers are *his*, as a man's wife and children are his own, which he loves and enjoys. He came to his own to seek and save them, because they were *his own*. He was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, for it was he whose own the sheep were. Now observe,

1. That the generality *rejected him*; *His own received him not*. He had reason to expect that those who were his own should have bidden him welcome, considering how great the obligations were which they lay under to him; and how far the opportunities were which they had of coming to the knowledge of him. They had the oracles of God, which told them beforehand, *when and where* to expect him, and of what tribe and family he should arise. He came among them himself, introduced with signs and wonders, and himself the greatest; and therefore it is not said of them as it was of the world, ver. 10. that they *knew him not*; but *his own*, though they could not but know him, yet they *received him not*: did not receive his doctrine, did not welcome him as the Messiah, but fortified themselves against him. The *chief priests*, that were in a particular manner *his own*, for the Levites were God's tribe, were ring-leaders in this contempt put upon him: Now this was very unjust, because they were *his own*, and therefore he might command their respects, and it was very unkind and ungrateful, because he came to them to seek and save them, and so court their respects. Note, Many who in profession are *Christ's own*, yet do not *receive him*, because they will not part with their sins nor have him to reign over them.

2. That yet there was a remnant who *owned him*, and were faithful to him. Though his own received him not, yet there were those that *received him*, ver. 12. *But as many as received him*: Though Israel were not gathered, yet Christ was *glorious*. Though the body of that nation persisted and perished in unbelief, yet there were many of them that were wrought upon to submit to Christ, and many more that were not of that fold. Observe here,

1. The true Christian's description and property: and that is, that he *receives Christ*, and *believes on his name*; the latter explains the former. Note, (1.) To a Christian indeed, is to believe in *Christ's name*: it is to assent to the gospel discovery, and consent to the gospel proposal concerning him. His name is the *Word of God*; the *King of kings*, the *Lord our righteousness*; *Jesus a Saviour*. Now to believe on his name, is to acknowledge that he is what these great names speak him, and to acquiesce in it that he be so to us. (2.) Believing in Christ's name is *receiving him* as a gift from God. We must receive his doctrine as true and good; receive his law as just and holy; receive his offers as kind and advantageous; and we must receive the image of his grace, and impressions of his love, as the governing principle of our affections and actions.

5. The true Christian's dignity and privilege are twofold.

1. The privilege of adoption, which takes them into the number of God's children; *to them gave he power to become the sons of God*. Hitherto the adoption pertained to the Jews only: *Israel is my Son, my first-born*; but now by faith in Christ, Gentiles are the *children of God*, Gal. iii. 26. They have power, *testimony, authority*; for no man taketh this power to himself but who is *authorised* by the gospel charter. To them gave he a right; to them gave he this pre-eminence. *This power have all the saints*. Note, (1.) It is the unspeakable privilege of all good Christians, that they are become the *children of God*. They were by nature children of wrath; children of this world. If they be the *children of God*, they become so, are made so. *Fiunt, non nascuntur Christiani*, Tertull. Behold what manner of love is this, 1 John iii. 1. God calls them his children, they call him Father, and are entitled to all the privileges of children: those of their way and those of their home. (2.) The privilege of adoption is entirely owing to *Jesus Christ*; he gave this power to them that believe on his name. God is his Father, and so ours; and it is by virtue of our espousals to him and union with him, that we stand related to God as a father. It was in Christ that we were *predestinated to the adoption*; from him we receive both the character and the Spirit of adoption, and he is the *first-born among many brethren*. The Son of God became a Son of man, that the sons and daughters of men might become the sons and daughters of God Almighty.

2. The privilege of regeneration, ver. 13. *which were born*. Note, All the children of God are born again: all that are adopted are regenerated: This real change evermore attends that relative one. Wherever God confers the dignity of children, he creates the nature and disposition of children. Men cannot do so when they adopt. Now here we have an account of the original of this new birth. 1. Negatively. (1.) It is not propagated by natural generation; from our parents. It is not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of corruptible seed, 1 Pet. i. 23. Man is called flesh and blood, because thence he has his original, but we do not become the children of God as we become the children of our natural parents. Note, Grace doth not run in the blood as corruption doth. Man polluted begat a son in his own likeness, Gen. v. 3. But man sanctified and renewed doth not beget a son in that likeness. The Jews gloried much in their parentage, and the noble blood that ran in their veins: we are Abraham's seed, and therefore to them pertained the adoption, because they were born of that blood; but this New Testament adoption is not founded in any such natural relation. (2.) It is not produced by the natural power of our own will. As it is not of blood, or of the will of the flesh, so neither is it of the will of man; that labours under a moral impotency of determining itself to that which is good; so that the principles of the divine life are not of our own planting, it is the grace of God that makes us willing to be *his*. Nor can human

laws or writings prevail to sanctify and regenerate a soul; if they could, the new birth would be by the will of man. But, 2. Positively, it is of God. This new birth is owing to the word of God, as the means, 1 Pet. i. 23. and to the Spirit of God as the great and sole author. True believers are *born of God*, 1 John iii. 9. and v. 1. And this is necessary to their adoption; for we cannot expect the love of God, if we have not something of his likeness, nor claim the privileges of adoption, if we be not under the power of regeneration.

4. The Word was made flesh, ver. 14. This expresseth Christ's incarnation more clearly than those before. By his divine presence he always was in the world, and by his prophets he came to his own. But now the fullness of time was come, he was sent forth after another manner *made of a woman*, Gal. iv. 4. God manifested in the flesh, according to the faith and hope of holy Job, chap. xix. 26. *Yet shall I see God in my flesh*. Observe here,

1. The human nature of Christ with which he was veiled; and that expressed two ways.

(1.) *The word was made flesh*. Forasmuch as the children, who were to become the sons of God, were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, Heb. ii. 14. The Socinians agree that Christ is both God and man, but they say, he was man, and was made God, as Moses, Exod. vii. 1. directly contrary to John here, who saith, *Θεὸς ἦν, Ἦν ἡ σὰρξ*, He was God, but *σὰρξ ἦν ἐν αὐτῷ* he was made flesh: Compare ver. 1. with this. This speaks not only that he was really and truly man, but that he subjected himself to the miseries and calamities of the human nature. He was made flesh, the meanest part of man; flesh speaks man weak, and he was crucified through weakness, 2 Cor. xiii. 4. Flesh speaks man mortal and dying, Psal. lxxviii. 39. and Christ was put to death in the flesh, 1 Pet. iii. 18. Nay, flesh speaks man tainted with sin, Gen. vi. 3. And Christ, though he was perfectly holy and harmless, yet appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh, Rom. viii. 3. and was made sin for us, 2 Cor. v. 6: When Adam had sinned; God said to him, *Dust thou art*, not only because made out of the dust, but because by sin he was sunk into dust: His fall did, *συνέβαλεν τὴν ψυχὴν*, turned him as it were all into body, made him earthly; therefore he that was made a curse for us, was made flesh, and condemned sin in the flesh, Rom. viii. 3. Wonder at this, that the eternal Word should be made flesh; when flesh was come into such an ill name; that he who made all things should himself be made flesh, one of the meanest things, and submit to that from which he was at the greatest distance. The voice that ushered in the gospel cried, *All flesh is grass*, Isa. xl. 1. to make the Redeemer's love the more wonderful, who to redeem and save us was made flesh, and withered as grass; but the Word of the Lord, who was made flesh, endures for ever; when made flesh he ceased not to be the word of God.

(2.) He dwelt among us, here in this lower world. Having taken upon him the nature of man, he put himself into the place and condition of other men. The Word might have been made flesh and dwelt among the angels, but having taken a body of the same mould with us, in it he came and resided in the same world with us. He dwelt among us, us worms of the earth, us that he had no need of, us that he got nothing by: us that were corrupt and depraved, and revolted from God. The Lord God came and dwelt even among the rebellious, Psal. lxxviii. 18. He that had dwelt among angels, those noble and excellent beings, came and dwelt among us that are a generation of vipers; us sinners which was worse to him than David's dwelling in Mesech and Kedar; or Ezekiel's dwelling among scorpions; or the church of Pergamus dwelling where Satan's seat is. When we look upon the upper world, the world of spirits, how mean and contemptible doth this flesh, this body appear, which we carry about with us, and this world in which our lot is cast; and how hard is it to a contemplative mind to be reconciled to them. But that the eternal Word was made flesh, was clothed with a body as we are, and dwelt in this world as we do; this has put an honour upon them both, and should make us willing to abide in the flesh while God has any work for us to do, for Christ dwelt in this lower world, as bad as it is, till he had finished what he had to do there, John xviii. 4. He dwelt among the Jews, that the scriptures might be fulfilled, *He shall dwell in the tents of Shem*, Gen. ix. 27. and see Zech. ii. 10. Though the Jews were unkind to him, yet he continued to dwell among them; though (as some of the ancient writers tell us) he was invited to better treatment by Abgarus king of Edessa, yet he removed not to any other nation.

He dwelt among us. He was in the world not as a wayfaring man that carries but for a night, but he dwelt among us, made a long residence; the original word is observable, *ἐσθνεν ἐν ἡμῖν*, he dwelt among us, he dwelt as in a tabernacle; which intimates, (1.) That he dwelt here in very mean circumstances, as shepherds that dwell in tents. He did not dwell among us as in a palace, but in a tent; for he had not where to lay his head, and was always upon the remove. (2.) That this state here was a military state; soldiers dwell in tents; he had long since proclaimed war with the seed of the serpent, and now he takes the field in person; sets up his standard, and pitcheth his tent to prosecute this war. (3.) That his stay among us was not to be perpetual. He dwelt here as in a tent, not as at home. The patriarchs, by dwelling in tabernacles, confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth, and sought the better country, and so did Christ, leaving us an example, Heb. xiii. 13, 14. (4.) That as of old God dwelt in the tabernacles of Moses by the Shechinah between the cherubims; so now he dwells in the human nature of Christ, that is now the true Shechinah, the symbol of God's peculiar presence: And we are to make all our addresses to God through Christ, and from him to receive divine oracles.

2. The beams of his divine glory that darted through this veil of flesh. We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The sun is still the fountain of light, though eclipsed or clouded; so Christ was still the brightness of his Father's glory, even then when he dwelt among us in this lower world. And how slightly soever the Jews thought of him, there were those that saw through the veil. Observe,

1. Who were the witnesses of his glory. We, his disciples and followers that conversed most freely and familiarly with him; we among whom he dwelt. Other men discover their weaknesses to those that are most familiar with them, but it was not so with Christ; those that were most intimate with him, saw most of his glory. As it was with his doctrine, the disciples knew the mysteries of it, while others had it under the veil of parables; so it was with his person, they saw the glory of his divinity, while others saw only the veil of his human nature. He manifested himself to them, and not unto the world. These witnesses were a competent number, twelve of them, a whole jury of witnesses; men of plainness and integrity, and far from any thing of design or intrigue.

2. What evidence they had of it; we saw it. They had not their evidence by report at second hand, but were themselves eye-witnesses of those proofs, on which they built their testimony that he was the Son of the living God. We saw it. The word signifies a fixing abiding sight, such as gave them an opportunity of making their observations. This Apostle himself explains this, *what we declare unto you of the word of life*, is what we have seen with our eyes, and what we have looked upon, 1 John i. 1.

3. What the glory was; the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. The

The glory of the *Word made flesh* was such a glory as became the only begotten Son of God, and could not be the glory of any other. Note, (1.) Jesus Christ is the only begotten of the Father: believers are the children of God by the special favour of adoption, and the special grace of regeneration; they are in a sense *ἐκγονοί*, of a like nature, 1 Pet. i. 4. and have the image of his perfections; but Christ is *ἐκγονός*, of the same nature, and is the express image of his person, and the son of God by an eternal generation. Angels are sons of God, but he never said to any of them, *This day have I begotten thee*, Heb. i. 5. (2.) He was evidently declared to be the only begotten of the Father, by that which was seen of his glory when he dwelt among us. Though he was in the *form of a servant* in respect of outward circumstances, yet in respect of grace his form was as that of the fourth in the fiery furnace, *like the Son of God*. His divine glory appeared in the holiness and heavenliness of his doctrine; in his miracles, which extorted from many this acknowledgement, that he was the Son of God; it appeared in the purity and goodness, and beneficence of his whole conversation; God's goodness is his glory, and he went about doing good: he spoke and acted in every thing as an incarnate deity. Perhaps the evangelist had a particular regard to the glory of his *transfiguration*, which he was an eye-witness of; see 2 Pet. i. 16, 17, 18. God's calling him his *beloved Son* in whom he was well pleased, spoke him the only begotten of the Father; but the full proof of this was at his resurrection.

4. What advantage those he dwelt among had from this. He dwelt among them full of *grace and truth*. In the old tabernacle wherein God dwelt was the *law*, in this was *grace*; in that were *types*, in this was *truth*. The incarnate word was every way qualified for his undertaking as Mediator, for he was full of *grace and truth*, the two great things that fallen man stands in need of; and this proved him to be the Son of God as much as the divine power and majesty that appeared in him. (1.) He has a fulness of *grace and truth* for himself; he had the spirit without measure. He was full of *grace*, i. e. fully acceptable to his Father, and therefore qualified to intercede for us; and full of *truth*, i. e. fully apprized of those things he was to reveal, and therefore fit to instruct us. He had a fulness of knowledge and a fulness of compassion. (2.) He was a fulness of *grace and truth* for us. He received that he might give, and God was well pleased in him, that he might be well pleased with us in him, and this was the *truth* of the legal types.

15. ¶ John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me, is preferred before me; for he was before me. 16. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. 17. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. 18. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

In these verses,

First, The evangelist begins again to give us John Baptist's testimony concerning Christ, ver. 15. He had said, ver. 8. that he came for a witness, now here he tells us that he did accordingly bear witness.

Here, 1. Observe, How he expressed his testimony, he cried, according to the prediction, that he should be the voice of one crying. The Old Testament prophets cried aloud to shew people their sins, this New Testament prophet cried aloud to shew people their Saviour. This intimates, (1.) That it was an open, public testimony proclaimed, that all manner of persons might take notice of it, for all are concerned in it. False teachers entice secretly, but wisdom publisheth her dictates in the chief places of concourse. (2.) That he was free and hearty in bearing this testimony. He cried as one that was both well assured of, and well affected to the truth he witnessed of. He that had leaped in his mother's womb for joy of Christ's approach when newly conceived, doth now with a like exultation of spirit welcome his public appearance.

2. What his testimony was. He appeals to what he hath said at the beginning of his ministry, when he had directed them to expect one that should come after him whose forerunner he was, and never intended any other but to lead them to him, and to prepare his way. This he had given them notice of from the first. Note, It is very comfortable to a minister to have the testimony of his conscience for him, that he set out in his ministry with honest principles and sincere intentions, with a single eye to the glory and honour of Christ. Now what he had then said, he applies to this Jesus whom he had lately baptized, and who was so remarkably owned from heaven. This was he of whom I spake. John did not tell them there would shortly appear such a one among them, and then leave them to find him out, but in this he went beyond all the Old Testament prophets, that he particularly specified the person, *this was he*; that is the very man I told you of, and to him all I said is to be accommodated. Now what was it he said?

1. He had given the preference to this Jesus: *He that comes after me is preferred before me*. In the time of his birth and public appearance; he that succeeds me in preaching and making disciples, yet is a more excellent person upon all accounts; as the prince or peer that comes after is preferred before the harbinger or gentleman-usher that makes way for him. Note, Jesus Christ, who was to be called the Son of the Highest, Luke i. 32. was preferred before John Baptist, who was to be called only the prophet of the Highest, Luke i. 76. John was a minister of the New Testament, but Christ was the Mediator of the New Testament. And observe, though John was a great man and had a great name and interest, yet he was formed to give the preference to him to whom it belonged. Note, All the ministers of Christ must prefer him; and his interest before themselves and their own interests: they will make an ill account that seek their own things, not the things of Christ, Phil. ii. 21. He comes after me, and yet is preferred before me. Note, God dispenseth his gifts according to his good pleasure, and many times crosseth hands as Jacob did, preferring the younger before the elder. Paul far out-stripped those that were in Christ before him.

2. He here gives a good reason for it, for he was before me, *ἐμπροσθεν μου*. He was my first, or first to one; he was my first cause, my original. The first is one of God's names, Isa. xlv. 6. He is before me, is my first. (1.) In respect of seniority he was before me, for he was before Abraham, John viii. 58. Nay, he was before all things, Col. i. 17. I but of yesterday, he from eternity. It was but in those days that John Baptist came, Matt. iii. 1. but the goings forth of our Lord Jesus were of old, from everlasting, Micah v. 2. This proves two natures in Christ: Christ as man came after John; as to his public appearance, Christ as God was before him; and how could he otherwise be before him but by an eternal existence. (2.) In respect of supremacy, for he was my prince: so some princes are called the first: *πρώτος*. It is he for whose sake and service I am sent: he is my Master, I am his minister and messenger.

Secondly, He presently returns again to speak of Jesus Christ, and cannot go on with John Baptist's testimony till ver. 19. The 10th verse has a manifest connection with ver. 14. where the incarnate Word was said to be full of *grace and truth*. Now here he makes this not only the matter of our adoration, but of our thankfulness, because from that fulness of his we all have received. He received gifts for men, Psalm lxxviii. 18. that he might give gifts to men, Eph. iv. 18. He was filled that he might fill all in all, Eph. i. 23. might fill our treasures, Prov. viii. 21. He has a fountain of fulness overflowing. We all have received. All we apostles, so some. We have received the favour of this apostleship, that is *grace*; and a fitness for it, that is *truth*; or rather, All we believers, as many as received him, ver. 17. received from him. Note, All true believers receive from Christ's fulness: the best and greatest saints cannot live without him, the meanest and weakest may live by him. This excludes proud boasting, that we have nothing but we have received it; and silenceth perplexing fears, that we want nothing but we may receive it.

Let us see what it is that we have received.

1. We have received *grace for grace*. Our receiving by Christ are all summed up in this one word, *grace*; we have received, *καὶ χάριν*, even *grace*, so great a gift, so rich, so invaluable; we have received no less than *grace*; that is a gift to be spoken of with an emphasis. It is repeated, *grace, for grace*; for to every stone in this building, as well as to the top-stone, we must cry, *Grace, grace*. Observe,

1. The blessing received; it is *grace*: the good-will of God towards us, and the good work of God in us. God's good will works the good work, and then the good work qualifies us for further tokens of his good will. As the cistern receives water from the fulness of the fountain, the branches sap from the fulness of the root, and the air light from the fulness of the sun, so we receive grace from the fulness of Christ.

2. The manner of its reception: *grace for grace*, *χάρις ὑπὲρ χάριτος*. The phrase is singular, and interpreters put different senses upon it, each of which will be of use to illustrate the unsearchable riches of the grace of Christ. *Grace for grace*, speaks,

1. The freeness of this grace; it is *grace* for *grace* sake; so Grotius. We receive grace not for our sakes, he it known so, but even so, Father, because it seemed good in thy sight. It is a gift according to *grace*, Rom. xii. 6. It is *grace* to us for the sake of *grace* to Jesus Christ. God was well pleased in him, and is therefore well pleased with us in him, Eph. i. 6.

2. The fulness of this grace, *Grace for grace* is abundance of *grace*, *grace upon grace*: so Camero, one *grace* heaped upon another; as *skin for skin*, is skin after skin, even all that a man has, Job ii. 4. It is a blessing poured out that there shall not be room to receive it, *plenteous redemption*. One *grace* a pledge of more *grace*. Joseph, he will add. It is such a fulness as is called the fulness of God, which we are filled with. We are not strained in the *grace* of Christ, if we be not strained in our own bosoms.

3. The serviceableness of this grace, *grace for grace*, is *grace* for the promoting and advancing of *grace*. *Grace* to be exercised by ourselves, gracious habits for gracious acts; *grace* to be ministered to others, gracious vouchsafements for gracious performances, *grace* is a talent to be traded with. The apostles received *grace*, Rom. i. 5. Eph. iii. 8. that they might communicate it, 1 Pet. iv. 10.

4. The substitution of New Testament grace, in the room and stead of Old Testament grace; so Beza. And this sense is confirmed by what follows, ver. 17. for the Old Testament had *grace* in type; the New Testament has *grace* in truth. There was a *grace* under the Old Testament, the gospel was preached then, Gal. iii. 8. but that *grace* is superseded, and we have gospel *grace* instead of it, a *glory which excelleth*, 2 Cor. iii. 10. Discoveries of *grace* are now more clear, distributions of *grace* far more plentiful; this is *grace* instead of *grace*.

5. It speaks the augmentation and continuance of *grace*; *grace for grace* is one *grace*, to improve, confirm, and perfect another *grace*. We are changed into the divine image, from *glory to glory*, from one degree of glorious *grace* to another, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Those that have true *grace*, have that for more *grace*, Jam. iv. 6. When God gives *grace* he saith, Take this in part, for he who hath promised will perform.

6. It speaks the agreeableness and conformity of *grace* in the saints to the *grace* that is in Jesus Christ. So Mr. Clark. *Grace for grace* is *grace* in us answering to *grace* in him, as the impression upon the wax answers the seal, line for line. The *grace* we receive from Christ, changeth us into the same image, 2 Cor. iii. 18. the image of the Son, Rom. viii. 29. the image of the heavenly, 1 Cor. xv. 49.

2. We have received *grace and truth*, ver. 17. He had said, ver. 14. That Christ was full of *grace and truth*; now here he saith, that by him *grace and truth* comes to us. From Christ we receive *grace*; that is a string he delights to harp upon, he cannot go off from it. Two things he further observes in this verse concerning this *grace*:

(1.) Its preference above the law of Moses. The law was given by Moses, and it was a glorious discovery, both of God's will concerning man, and his good will to man; but the gospel of Christ is a much clearer discovery, both of duty and happiness. That which was given by Moses was purely terrifying and threatening, and bound with penalties, a law which could not give life, which was given with abundance of terror, Heb. xii. 18. But that which is given by Jesus Christ is of another nature, it has all the beneficial uses of the law, but not the terror, for it is *grace*. *Grace teaching*, Tit. ii. 11. *Grace reigning*, Rom. v. 21. It is a law, but a remedial law. The endearments of love are the genius of the gospel, not the affrightments of law and the curse.

(2.) Its connection with truth; *grace and truth*. In the gospel we have the discovery of the greatest truths, to be embraced by the understanding as well as of the richest *grace*, to be embraced by the will and affections. It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, i. e. it is *grace and truth*. The offers of *grace* are sincere, and what we may venture our souls upon: they are made in earnest, for it is *grace and truth*. It is *grace and truth*, with reference to the law that was given by Moses. For it is, (1.) The performance of all the Old Testament prophecies. In the Old Testament we often find *mercy and truth* put together, i. e. *mercy* according to the promise; so here, *grace and truth* is *grace* according to the promise. See Luke i. 72. 1 Kings viii. 56. (2.) It is the substance of all the Old Testament types and shadows. Something of *grace* there was both in the ordinances that were instituted for Israel, and the providences that were concerning Israel; but they were only shadows of good things to come, even of that *grace* that is to be brought to us by the revelation of Jesus Christ. He is the true paschal lamb, the true scape-goat, the true manna, &c. They had *grace* in the picture, we have *grace* in the person, that is *grace and truth*. *Grace and truth came, ἦν καὶ ἀλήθεια*, was made; the same word that was used, ver. 3. concerning Christ's making all things. The law was only made known by Moses, but the being of this *grace and truth*, as well as the discovery of it, is owing to Jesus Christ; this was made by him, as the world at first was; and by him this *grace and truth* do consist.

3. Another thing we receive from Christ is a clear revelation of God to us, ver. 18. He hath declared God to us, whom no man hath seen at any time,

time. This was the grace and truth which came by Christ, the knowledge of God and an acquaintance with him. Observe,

1. The insufficiency of all other discoveries. *No man hath seen God at any time.* This speaks, (1.) That the nature of God being *spiritual*, he is invisible to bodily eyes, he is a being, *whom no man hath seen or can see*, 1 Tim. vi. 16. we have therefore need to *live by faith*, by which we see him that is invisible, Heb. xi. 27. (2.) That the revelation which God made of himself in the Old Testament, was very short and imperfect, in comparison with that which he has made by Christ; *No man hath seen God at any time*, i. e. what was seen and known of God before the incarnation of Christ, was nothing to that which is now seen and known: life and immortality are now brought to much clearer light than they were then. (3.) That none of the Old Testament prophets were so well qualified to make known the mind and will of God to the children of men as our Lord Jesus was, for none of them had seen God at any time; *Moses beheld the similitude of the Lord*, Numb. xii. 8. but was told he could not see his face, Exod. xxxii. 20. But this recommends Christ's holy religion to us, that it was founded by one that had seen God, and knew more of his mind than any one else ever did, for he had seen him, which they never did.

2. The all-sufficiency of the gospel-discovery, proved from its author, *the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father he has declared him.* Observe here,

1. How fit he was to make this discovery, and every way qualified for it, He, and none but he, was *worthy to take the book and open the seals*, Rev. v. 9. For, (1.) He is *the only begotten Son*, and who so likely to know the Father as the Son; or, in whom is the Father better known than in the Son? *Matt. xi. 27.* He is of the same nature with the Father, so that he who hath seen him hath seen the Father, John xiv. 9. The servant is not supposed to know so well what his Lord doth, as the Son, John xv. 15. *Moses was faithful as a servant*, but Christ as a Son. (2.) He is *in the bosom of the Father*. He had lain in his bosom from eternity; when he was there upon earth, yet still, as God he was in the bosom of the Father, and thither he returned when he ascended. *In the bosom of the Father*, i. e. 1. In the bosom of his special love, dear to him, in whom he was well pleased, always his delight. All God's saints are in his hand, but his Son was in his bosom, one in nature and essence, and therefore in the highest degree one in love. 2. In the bosom of his secret counsels. As there was a natural complacency so there was a mutual consciousness between the Father and Son, *Matt. xi. 27.* none so fit as he to make known God, for none knew his mind so as he did. Our most secret counsels we are said to hide in our bosom (*in petto*) Christ was privy to the bosom counsels of the Father. The prophets sit down at his feet as scholars, Christ lay in his bosom as a friend. See *Eph. iii. 11.*

2. How free he was in making this discovery; *he hath declared; he is not the original.* He has declared that of God which no man had at any time seen or known; not only that which was hid of God, but that which was hid in God, *Eph. iii. 9.* *Ignorantia*, it signifies, a plain, clear and full discovery, not by general and doubtful hints, but by particular explications: He that runs may now read the will of God and the way of salvation. This is the grace, this the truth that came by Jesus Christ.

19. ¶ And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? 20. And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. 21. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. 22. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? 23. He said I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. 24. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. 25. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? 26. John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; 27. He it is, who cometh after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. 28. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

We have here the testimony of John, which he delivered to the messengers which were sent from Jerusalem to examine him. Observe here,

First, Who they were that sent to him, and who they were that were sent.

1. They that sent to him were the Jews at Jerusalem; the great Sanhedrim or High-commission court, which sat at Jerusalem, and was the representative of the Jewish church, who took cognisance of all matters relating to religion. One would think that they who were the fountains of learning, and the guides of the church, should have, by books, understood the times so well, as to know that the Messiah was at hand, and therefore should presently have known him that was his forerunner, and readily embraced him; but instead of that they sent messengers to cross questions with him. Secular learning, honour, and power, seldom dispose men's minds to the reception of divine light.

2. They that were sent were, (1.) *Priests and Levites*, probably members of the council, men of learning, gravity, and authority; John Baptist was himself a priest, of the seed of Aaron, and therefore it was not fit he should be examined by any but priests. It was prophesied concerning John's ministry, that it should *purify the sons of Levi*, Mal. iii. 3. and therefore they were jealous of him and his reformation. (2.) *They were of the Pharisees*, proud, self-justifiers, that thought they needed no repentance, and therefore could not bear one that made it his business to preach repentance.

Secondly, On what errand they went; it was to inquire concerning John and his baptism. They did not send for John up to them, probably because they feared the people, lest the people where John was should be provoked to rise, or lest the people where they were, should be brought acquainted with him; they thought it was good keeping him at a distance.

They enquire concerning him, (1.) To satisfy their curiosity; as the Athenians inquired concerning Paul's doctrine, for the novelty of it, *Acts xvii. 19, 20.* Such a proud conceit they had of themselves, that the doctrine of repentance was to them strange doctrine. (2.) It was to shew their authority. They thought they looked great when they called him to account, whom all men counted as a prophet, and arraigned him at their bar. (3.)

It was with a design to suppress him and silence him if they could find any colour for it, for they were jealous of his growing interest; and his ministry agreed neither with the Mosaic dispensation, which they had been long under, nor with the notions they had formed of the Messiah's kingdom.

Thirdly, What was the answer he gave them, and his account, both concerning himself and concerning his baptism, in both which he witnessed of Christ.

1. Concerning himself, and what he professed himself to be. They asked him, *Εὐχάριστος; Thou, Who art thou?* John's appearing in the world was surprising; he was in the wilderness till the day of his shewing unto Israel; his spirit, his converse, his doctrine had something in them which commanded and gained respect: but he did not, as seducers do, give out himself to be some great one. He was more industrious to do good than to appear great; and therefore waved saying any thing of himself till he was legally interrogated. Those speak best for Christ, that say least of themselves, whose own works praise them, not their own lips.

He answers their interrogatory,

1. *Negatively.* He was not that great one whom some took him to be; God's faithful witnesses stand more upon their guard against undue respects; than against unjust contempts. Paul writes as warmly against those that overvalued him and said, *I am of Paul*, as against those that undervalued him, and said his bodily presence was weak, and rent his clothes when he was called a god.

1. John disowns himself to be the Christ, ver. 20. he said, *I am not the Christ*, who was now expected and waited for. Note, The ministers of Christ must remember that they are not Christ, and therefore must not usurp his powers and prerogatives, nor assume the praises due to him only. They are not Christ, and therefore must not lord it over God's heritage, nor pretend to a dominion over the faith of Christians. They cannot create grace and peace, they cannot enlighten, convert, quicken, comfort, for they are not Christ. Observe how emphatically this is here expressed concerning John. He confessed and denied not, but confessed; it denotes his vehemence and constancy in making this protestation. Note, Temptations to pride, and assuming that honour to ourselves which doth not belong to us; ought to be resisted with a great deal of vigour and earnestness. When John was taken to be the Messiah, he did not connive at it with a *St populus vult decipi, decipitur*; but openly and solemnly, without any ambiguities, confessed *I am not the Christ*: *ὁτι ἐκ δούλου ὁ Χριστός*; *I am not the Christ not I*; another is at hand, who is, but I am not. His disowning himself to be the Christ is, called his confessing and not denying Christ. Note, Those that humble and abase themselves thereby confess Christ, and give honour to him; but those that will not deny themselves do in effect deny Christ.

2. He disowns himself to be Elias, ver. 21. the Jews expected the person of Elias to return from heaven, and to live among them, and promised themselves great matters from it; and hearing of John's character, doctrine and baptism, and observing that he appeared as one dropped from heaven, in the same part of the country from which Elijah was carried to heaven, it is no wonder that they were ready to take him for this Elijah: but he disowned this honour too. He was indeed prophesied of under the name of Elijah, *Mal. iv. 5.* and he came in the spirit and power of Elias, *Luke i. 17.* and was the Elias that was to come, *Matt. xi. 14.* but he was not the person of Elias; not that Elias that went to heaven in the fiery chariot, as he was that met Christ in his transfiguration: he was the Elias that God had promised, not the Elias that they foolishly dreamed of, Elias did come, and they knew him not, *Matt. xvii. 12.* nor did he make himself known to them as the Elias, because they had promised themselves such an Elias as God never promised them.

3. He disowns himself to be that prophet, or the prophet. (1.) He was not that prophet which Moses said the Lord would raise up to them of their brethren; like unto him. If they meant that, they needed not ask that question, for that prophet was no other than the Messiah, and he had said already, *I am not the Christ.* (2.) He was not such a prophet as they expected and wished for, who, like Samuel and Elijah, and some other of the prophets, would interpose in public affairs, and rescue them from under the Roman yoke. (3.) He was not one of the old prophets raised from the dead, as they expected one to come before Elias, as Elias before the Messiah. (4.) Though John was a prophet, yea, more than a prophet, yet he had his revelation not by dreams and visions, as the Old Testament prophets had theirs; his commission and work was of another nature, and belonged to another dispensation. If John had said that he was Elias, and was a prophet, he might have made his words good, but ministers must, upon all occasions express themselves with the utmost caution, both that they do not confirm people in any mistakes, and particularly that they give not occasion to any to think of them above what is meet.

2. *Affirmatively.* The committee that was sent to examine him pressed for a positive answer, ver. 22. urging the authority of them that sent them, which they expected he should pay a deference to: Tell us, *What art thou?* Not that we may believe thee, and be baptized by thee, but that we may give an answer, to them that sent us, and it may not be said that we were sent on a fool's errand: John was looked upon as a man of sincerity, and therefore they believed he would not give an evasive ambiguous answer, but would be fair and above-board, and give a plain answer to a plain question? *What sayest thou of thyself?* And he did so, *I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness.* Observe,

1. He gives his answer in the words of scripture, to shew that the scripture was fulfilled in him; and that his office was supported by a divine authority. What the scripture saith of the office of the ministry should be often thought of by those of that high calling, who must look upon themselves as that, and that only, which the word of God makes them.

2. He gives in an answer in very humble, modest, self-denying expressions; he chooseth to apply that scripture to himself, which spoke not his dignity, but his duty and dependence, which speaks him little; *I am the voice*, as if he were *vox & praterea nihil*.

3. He gave such an account of himself as might be profitable to them, and might excite and awaken them to hearken to him, for he was the voice, see *Isa. xl. 3.* a voice to alarm; an articulate voice to instruct. Ministers are but the voice, the vehicle by which God is pleased to communicate his mind: What are Paul and Apollos but messengers? Observe,

1. He was a human voice. The people were prepared to receive the law by the voice of thunders, and a trumpet exceeding loud, such as made them tremble, but they were prepared for the gospel by the voice of a man like ourselves, a still small voice, such as that in which God came to Elijah, *1 Kings xix. 12.*

2. He was the voice of one crying; which notes, (1.) His earnestness and importunity in calling people to repentance; he cried aloud and did not spare. Ministers must preach as those that are in earnest, and are themselves affected with those things which they desire to affect others with: Those words are not likely to thaw the hearers hearts, that freeze between the speaker's lips.

(2.) His open publication of the doctrine he preached; he was the voice of one crying, that all manner of persons might hear and take notice. *Doth not wisdom cry*, Prov. viii. 3.

3. It was in the wilderness that this voice was crying; in a place of silence and solitude, out of the noise of the world, and the hurry of its business; the more retired we are from the tumult of secular affairs the better prepared we are to hear from God.

4. That which he cried was, *Make straight the way of the Lord*; that is, (1.) He came to rectify the mistakes of people concerning the ways of God: it is certain they are right ways, but the Scribes and Pharisees with their corrupt glosses upon the law had made them crooked: Now John Baptist calls people to return to the original rule. (2.) He came to prepare and dispose people for the reception and entertainment of Christ and his gospel. It is an allusion to the harbingers of a prince or great man, that cry, *make room*. Note, When God is coming towards us we must prepare to meet him and let the word of the Lord have free course, See *Psalms* xxiv. 7.

2. Here is his testimony concerning his baptism.

1. The inquiry which the committee made about it, *ver. 25. Why baptizest thou, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet?* (1.) They readily apprehended baptism to be fitly and properly used as a sacred rite or ceremony, for the Jewish church had used it with circumcision in the admission of proselytes, to signify the cleansing of them from the pollutions of their former state; That sign was made use of in the Christian church, that it might be more passable. Christ did not affect novelty, nor should his ministers. (2.) They expected it would be used in the days of the Messiah, because it was promised that then there should be a fountain opened, *Zech. xiii. 1.* and *clean water sprinkled*, *Ezek. xxxiv. 25.* it is taken for granted that Christ, and Elias, and that prophet, would baptize, for they came to purify a polluted world. Divine justice drowned the old world in its filth, but divine grace has provided for the cleansing of this new world from its filth. (3.) They would therefore know by what authority John baptized. His denying himself to be Elias or that prophet, subjected him to this farther question, *Why baptizest thou?* Note, It is no new thing for a man's modesty to be turned against him, and improved to his prejudice; but it is better men should take advantage of our low thoughts of ourselves to trample upon us, than the devil take advantage of our high thoughts of ourselves to tempt us to pride, and draw us into his condemnation.

2. The account he gave of it, *ver. 26, 27.*

1. He owned himself to be only the minister of the outward sign, *I baptize with water*, and that is all; I am no more; and do no more than what you see: I have no other title but John the Baptist; I cannot confer the spiritual grace signified by it. Paul was in care that none should think of him above what they saw him to be, *2 Cor. xii. 6.* so was John Baptist. Ministers must not set up for masters.

2. He directed them to one that was greater than himself, and would do that for them if they pleased, which he could not do. *I baptize with water*, and that is the utmost of my commission; I have nothing to do but by this to lead you to one that comes after me and consign you to him. Note, The great business of Christ's ministers is to direct all people to him; we preach not ourselves, but *Christ Jesus our Lord*. John gave the same account to this committee that he had given to the people, *ver. 15. This was he of whom I spake*. John was constant and uniform in his testimony, not as a reed shaken with the wind. The Sanhedrin were jealous of his interest in the people, but he is not afraid to tell them that there is one at the door that will go beyond him.

1. He tells them of Christ's presence among them now at this time; there stands one among you at this time whom you know not: Christ stood among the common people, and was as one of them. Note, 1. There is much true worth lies hid in this world: obscurity is often the lot of real excellency. Saints are God's hidden-ones, therefore the world knows him not. 2. God himself is often nearer us than we are aware of: the Lord is in this place and I knew it not. They were gazing in expectation of the Messiah, *Lo he is here*, or he is there, when the kingdom of God was abroad and already among them, *Luke xvii. 21.*

2. He tells them of his preference above himself; he comes after me, and yet is preferred before me: This he had said before; he adds here, whose shoe-latchet I am not worthy to unloose; I am not fit to be named the same day with him; it is an honour too great for me to pretend to be in the meanest office about him. Alluding to *1 Sam. xxiv. 41.* Those to whom Christ is precious reckon his service, even the most despised instances of it, an honour to them. See *Psalms* lxxxiv. 10. If so great a man as John accounted himself unworthy of the honour of being near Christ, how unworthy then should we account ourselves! Now one would think these chief priests and Pharisees, upon this intimation given concerning the approach of the Messiah, should presently have asked, who and where this excellent person was; and who more likely to tell them than he who had given them this general notice? No, they did not think that was any part of their business or concern; they came to molest John, not to receive any instructions from him: so that their ignorance was wilful; they might have known Christ, and would not.

Lastly, Notice is taken of the place where all this was done, *ver. 28. In Bethabara beyond Jordan*. Bethabara signifies the house of passage; some think it was the very place where Israel passed over Jordan into the land of promise under the conduct of Joshua; there was opened the way into the gospel-state by Jesus Christ. It was at a great distance from Jerusalem, beyond Jordan; probably because what he did there would be least offensive to the government. Amos must go prophesy in the country, not near the court; but it was said that Jerusalem should put so far from her the things that belonged to her peace. He made this confession in the same place where he was baptizing, that all those who attended his baptism might be witnesses of it, and none might say, they know not what to make of him.

29. ¶ The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him; and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. 30. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. 31. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. 32. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. 33. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. 34. And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God. 35. ¶ Again the next day after, John stood and two of his disciples; 36. And

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looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God.

We have in these verses an account of John's testimony concerning Jesus Christ, which he witnessed to his own disciples that followed him. As soon as ever Christ was baptized he was immediately hurried into the wilderness to be tempted; there he was forty days: during his absence John had continued to bear testimony to him, and to tell the people of him; but now at last he sees Jesus coming to him, returning from the wilderness of temptation: as soon as that conflict was over Christ presently returned to John, who was preaching and baptizing. Now Christ was tempted for example and encouragement to us; and this teacheth us, (1.) That the hardships of a tempted state should engage us to keep close to ordinances; to go into the sanctuary of God, *Psal. lxxiii. 17.* Our combats with Satan should oblige us to keep close to the communion of saints; two are better than one.

(2.) That the honours of a victorious state must not set us above ordinances. Christ had triumphed over Satan, and been attended by angels, and yet after all he returns to the place where John was preaching and baptizing. As long as we are on this side heaven, whatever extraordinary visits of divine grace we may have here at any time, we must still keep close to the ordinary means of grace and comfort, and walk with God in them.

Now here are two testimonies borne by John to Christ, but those two agree in one.

First, Here is his testimony to Christ on the first day that he saw him coming from the wilderness; and here four things are witnessed by him concerning Christ when he had him before his eyes.

1. That he is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, *ver. 29.* Let us learn here,

1. That Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, which speaks him the great sacrifice by whom atonement is made for sin, and man reconciled to God. Of all the legal sacrifices he chooseth to allude to the lambs that were offered, not only because a lamb is an emblem of meekness, and Christ must be led as a lamb to the slaughter, *Isa. liii. 7.* but with a special reference, (1.) To the daily sacrifice which was offered every morning and evening continually, and that was always a lamb, *Exod. xxix. 38.* which was a type of Christ, as the everlasting propitiation, whose blood continually speaks. (2.) To the paschal lamb, the blood of which being sprinkled upon the door posts, secured the Israelites from the stroke of the destroying angel. Christ is our passover, *1 Cor. v. 7.*

He is the Lamb of God; he is appointed by him, *Rom. iii. 25.* he was devoted to him, *John xvii. 19.* and he was accepted with him; in him he was well pleased. The lot which fell on the goat that was to be offered for a sin-offering is called the Lord's lot, *Lev. xvii. 8, 9.* So Christ, who was to make atonement for sin, is called the Lamb of God.

(1.) He takes away sin. He being mediator between God and man, takes away that which is above any thing offensive to the holiness of God and destructive to the happiness of man. He came, 1. To take away the guilt of sin by the merit of his death, to vacate the judgment, and reverse the attainder which mankind lay under, by an act of indemnity, which all penitent, obedient believers may claim the benefit of. 2. To take away the power of sin by the Spirit of his grace, so that it shall not have dominion *Rom. vi. 14.* Christ, as the Lamb of God, washeth us from our sins in his own blood, i. e. he both justifies and sanctifies us: he taketh away sin. He is *in act*, he is taking away the sin of the world, which speaks it not a single but a continued act; it is his constant work and office to take away sin, which is such a work of time, that it will never be completed till time shall be no more. He is always taking away sin by the continual intercession of his blood in heaven, and the continual influence of his grace on earth.

(2.) He takes away the sin of the world; purchased pardon for all those that repent and believe the gospel, of what country, nation or language soever they be. The legal sacrifices had reference only to the sins of Israel, to make atonement for them; but the Lamb of God was offered to be a propitiation for the sin of the whole world, see *1 John ii. 12.* This is encouraging to our faith; if Christ takes away the sin of the world, then why not my sin? Christ levelled his force at the main body of sin's army, struck at the root, and aimed at the overthrow of that wickedness which the whole world lay in: God was in him reconciling the world to himself.

(3.) He doth this by taking it upon himself. He is the Lamb of God that bears the sin of the world, so the margin reads it. He bore sin for us, and so bears it from us; he bore the sin of many, as the scape-goat had the sins of Israel put upon his head, *Lev. xvi. 21.* God could have taken away the sin, by taking away the sinner, as he took away the sin of the old world; but he has found out a way of abolishing the sin and yet sparing the sinner, by making his Son sin for us.

3. That it is our duty, with an eye of faith, to behold the Lamb of God thus taking away the sin of the world. See him taking away sin, and let that increase our hatred of sin and resolutions against it: Let not us hold that fast which the Lamb of God came to take away: for Christ will either take our sins away or take us away. Let it increase our love to Christ who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, *Rev. i. 5.* Whatever God is pleased to take away from us if withal he take away our sins, we have reason to be thankful, and no reason to complain.

2. That this was he of whom he had spoken before, *ver. 30, 31. This is he, this person whom I now point at, you see where he stands, This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man.* Observe,

(1.) This honour John had above all the prophets, that whereas they spoke of him as one that should come, he saw him already come. This is he: He sees him now, he sees him nigh, *Numb. xxiv. 17.* Such a difference there is between present faith and future vision. Now we love one whom we have not seen, then we shall see him whom our souls love: shall see him and say, This is he of whom I said, my Christ, and my all; my beloved and my friend.

(2.) John calls Christ a man: after me comes a man, *and, a strong man;* Like the man, the branch, or the man of God's right hand.

(3.) He refers himself to what he had said of him before, *This is he of whom I said.* Note, Those who have said the most honourable things of Christ will never see cause to unsay them; but the more they know him, the more they are confirmed in their esteem of him. John still thinks as meanly of himself, and as highly of Christ as ever. Though Christ appeared not in any external pomp or grandeur, yet John is not ashamed to own, *This is he I meant, that is preferred before me.* And it was necessary that John should thus shew them the person, otherwise they could not have believed that one who made so mean a figure should be he of whom John had spoken such great things.

(4.) He protests against any confederacy or combination with this Jesus; *And I knew him not.* Though there was some relation between them, Elizabeth was cousin to the virgin Mary, yet there was no acquaintance at all between them; John had no personal knowledge of Jesus till he saw him come to the baptism. Their manner of life had been different: John had spent his time in the wilderness in solitude; Jesus at Nazareth, in conversation;

conversation: There was no correspondence, no interviews between them, but the matter appears to be wholly carried on by the direction and disposal of heaven, and not by any design or concert of the persons themselves. And as he hereby disowns all collusion, so also all partiality and sinister regard in it; he could not be supposed to favour him as a friend, for there was no friendship or familiarity between them. Nay, as he could not be biased to speak honourably of him because he was a stranger to him, so really being such a stranger to him, he was not able to say any thing of him but what he received from above, to which he appeals, *John iii. 27.* Note, They who are taught, believe and confess one whom they have not seen, and blessed are they who yet have believed.

3. That the great intention of John's ministry and baptism to introduce Jesus Christ. That he should be made manifest to Israel therefore am I come baptizing with water. Observe,

(1.) Though John did not know Jesus by face, yet he knew that he should be made manifest. Note, We may know the certainty of that which yet we do not fully know the nature and intention of. We know that the happiness of heaven shall be made manifest to Israel, but cannot describe it. (2.) The general assurance John had that Christ should be made manifest, served to carry him with diligence and resolution through his work, though he was kept in the dark concerning particulars: *Therefore am I come.* Our assurance of the reality of things, though they are unseen, is enough to quicken us to our duty. (3.) God reveals himself to his people by degrees. At first John knew no more concerning Christ but that he should be made manifest: in confidence of that he came baptizing, and now he is favoured with a sight of him. They that upon God's word believe what they do not see, shall shortly see what they now believe. (4.) The ministry of the word and sacraments is designed for no other end, but to lead people to Christ, and to make him more and more manifest. (5.) Baptism with water made way for the manifesting of Christ, as it supposed our corruption and filthiness, and signified our cleansing by him who is the fountain opened.

3. That this was he upon whom the Spirit descended from heaven like a dove. For the confirming of his testimony concerning Christ, he here voucheth the extraordinary appearance at his baptism, in which God himself bore witness to him: this was a considerable proof of Christ's mission. Now to assure us of the truth of it we are here told, *ver. 32, 33.*

1. That John Baptist saw it; he bare record; did not relate it as a story, but solemnly attested it, with all the seriousness and solemnity of witness-bearing: He made affidavit of it; *I saw the Spirit descending from heaven:* John could not see the Spirit, but he saw the dove, which was a sign and representation of the Spirit. The Spirit came now upon Christ both to make him fit for his work, and to make him known to the world. Christ was notified, not by the descent of a crown upon him, or by a transfiguration, but by the descent of the Spirit as a dove upon him, to qualify him for his undertaking. Thus the first testimony given to the apostles was by the descent of the Spirit upon them: God's children are made manifest by their graces, their glories are reserved for their future state. Observe, (1.) The Spirit descended from heaven, for every good and perfect gift is from above. (2.) He descended like a dove, an emblem of meekness, and mildness, and gentleness, which makes him fit to teach. The dove brought the olive-branch of peace, *Gen. viii. 11.* (3.) The Spirit that descended upon Christ abode upon him, as was foretold, *Isa. xi. 2.* The Spirit did not move him at times, as Samson, *Judg. xiii. 25.* but at all times. The Spirit was given to him without measure; it was his prerogative always to have the Spirit upon him, so that he could at no time be found either unqualified for his work himself, or unfurnished for the supply of those that seek to him for his grace.

2. That he was bidden to expect it, which very much corroborates the proof. It was not John's bare conjecture, that surely he on whom he saw the Spirit descending was the Son of God; but it was an instituted sign given him before, by which he might know it for certain, *ver. 33. I knew him not.* This he insists much upon, that he knew no more of him than other people did, otherwise than by revelation: But he that sent me to baptize, gave me this sign, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, the same is he.

1. See here what sure grounds John went upon in his ministry and baptism, that he might proceed with all imaginable satisfaction. (1.) He did not run without sending. God sent him to baptize: He had a warrant from heaven for what he did. When a minister's call is clear his comfort is sure, though his success is not always so. (2.) He did not run without speeding: for when he was sent to baptize with water, he was directed to one that should baptize with the Holy Ghost; under that notion John Baptist was taught to expect Christ, as one who would give that repentance and faith which he called people to, and would carry on and complete that blessed structure which he was now laying the foundation of. Note, It is a great comfort to Christ's ministers in their administration of the outward signs, that he whose ministers they are can confer the grace signified thereby, and so put life and soul and power into their ministrations; can speak to the heart what they speak to the ear, and breathe upon the dry bones on which they prophesy.

2. See what sure ground he went upon in his designation of the person of the Messiah. God had before given him a sign, as he did to Samuel concerning Saul, on whom thou shalt see the Spirit descend, that same is he, this not only prevented any mistakes, but gave him boldness in his testimony. When he had such assurance as this given him he could speak with assurance. When John was told this before, his expectations could not but be very much raised; and when the event exactly answered the prediction, his faith could not but be much confirmed. And these things are written that we may believe.

4. That he is the Son of God. This is the conclusion of John's testimony, that in which all the particulars centre, as *quod erat demonstrandum*, *ver. 34. I saw and bare record, that this is the Son of God.*

1. The truth asserted is, That this is the Son of God; the voice from heaven proclaimed him, and John subscribed to it; not only that he should baptize with the Holy Ghost by a divine authority, but that he has a divine nature: This was the peculiar Christian creed, that Jesus is the Son of God, *Mat. xvi. 16.* and here is the first framing of it.

2. John's testimony to it; *I saw and bare record.* Not only I now bear record of it, but I did so as soon as I had seen it. Observe, (1.) What he saw he was forward to bear record of, as they, *Acts ix. 20. We cannot but speak the things which we have seen.* (2.) What he bare record of was what he saw, Christ's witnesses were eye-witnesses, and therefore the more to be credited: They did not speak by hear-say and report, *2 Pet. i. 16.*

Secondly, Here is John's testimony to Christ the next day after, *ver. 35.*

36. Where observe, 1. He took every opportunity that offered itself to lead people to Christ, John stood looking upon Jesus as he walked. It should seem John was now retired from the multitude, and was in close conversation with two of his disciples. Note, Ministers should not only in their public preaching; but in their private converse, witness to Christ and serve his interests. He saw Jesus walking at some distance, yet did not go to him himself, because he would shun every thing that might give the least colour to suspect a combi-

nation. He was looking upon Jesus *ἑστῶτος*; he looked stedfastly, and fixed his eyes upon him. Those that would lead others to Christ must be diligent and frequent in the contemplation of him themselves. John had seen Christ before, but now looked upon him, *1 John i. 1.*

2. He repeated the same testimony which he had given to Christ the day before, though he could have delivered some other great truth concerning him; but thus he would shew that he was uniform and constant in his testimony, and consistent with himself. His doctrine was the same in private that it was in public, as Paul's was, *Acts xx. 20, 21.* It is good to have that repeated which we have heard, *Phil. iii. 1.* The doctrine of Christ's sacrifice for the taking away of the sin of the world, ought especially to be insisted upon by all good ministers. Christ, the Lamb of God, Christ and him crucified.

3. He intended this especially for his two disciples that stood with him: he was willing to turn them over to Christ, for to this end he bore witness to Christ in their hearing, that they might leave all to follow him; even that they might leave him. He did not reckon that he lost those disciples that went over from him to Christ, any more than the school-master reckons that scholar lost whom he sends to the university. John gathered disciples not for himself but for Christ to prepare them for the Lord, *Luke i. 17.* So far was he from being jealous of Christ's growing interest, that there was nothing he was more desirous of. Humble generous souls will give others that due praise without fear of diminishing themselves by it. What we have of reputation as well as of other things, will not be the less for our giving every body their own.

37. ¶ And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? 39. He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. 40. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. 42. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

We have here the turning over of two disciples from John to Jesus, and one of them fetching in a third, and these are the first-fruits of Christ's disciples; see how small the church was in its beginnings, and what the dawning of the day of its great things were.

First, Andrew and another with him were the two that John Baptist had directed to Christ, *ver. 37.* who the other was we are not told; some think it was Thomas, comparing *chap. xxi. 2.* others, that it was John himself, the penman of this gospel, who useth industriously to conceal his name, *John xiii. 23.* and *xx. 3.*

1. Here is their readiness to go over to Christ, they heard John speak of Christ as the Lamb of God, and they followed Jesus; Probably they had heard John say the same thing the day before, and then it had not the effect upon them which now it had; see the benefit of repetition, and of private personal converse. They heard him speak of Christ as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, and that made them follow him. Note, The strongest and most prevailing argument with a sensible awakened soul to follow Christ is, that it is he, and he only that takes away sin.

2. The kind notice Christ took of them, *ver. 38.* they came behind him; but though he had his back towards them he was soon aware of them, and turned and saw them following. Note, Christ takes early cognizance of the first motions of a soul towards him, and the first step taken in the way to heaven; see *Isa. lxiv. 20.* *Luke xv. 20.* He did not stay till they begged leave to speak to him, but spoke first: What communion there is between a soul and Christ, it is he that begins the discourse. He saith unto them, What seek ye? This was not a reprimand for their boldness in intruding into his company; he that came to seek us, never checked any for seeking him; but on the contrary, it is a kind invitation of them into his acquaintance, whom he saw bashful and modest; come, what have you to say to me? What is your petition? What is your request? Note, They whose business it is to instruct people in the affairs of their souls, should be humble and mild, and easy of access, and should encourage those that apply to them. The question Christ put to them is what we should all put to ourselves when we begin to follow Christ, and take upon us the profession of his holy religion? What seek ye? What do we design and desire? Those that follow Christ, and yet seek the world or themselves, or the praise of men, deceive themselves. What seek we in seeking Christ? do we seek a teacher, ruler and reconciler? In following Christ do we seek the favour of God and eternal life? If our eye be single in this, we are full of light.

3. Their modest inquiry concerning the place of his abode? Rabbi, where dwellest thou? (1.) In calling him Rabbi, they intimate, that their design, in coming to him was to be taught by him; *rabbi* signifies master, a teaching master; the Jews called their doctors or learned men, rabbies. The word comes from *rab*, multus, or magnus, a rabbi, a great man, and one that, as we say, hath much in him. Never was there such a rabbi as our Lord Jesus, such a great one, in whom were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. These came to Christ to be his scholars, so must all those that apply themselves to him. John had told them he was the Lamb of God, now this Lamb is worthy to take the book, and open the seals as a rabbi, *Rev. v. 9.* And unless we give up ourselves to be ruled and taught by him, he will not take away our sins. (2.) In asking where he dwelt, they intimate a desire to be better acquainted with him: Christ was a stranger in this country, so that they mean, where was his inn, where he lodged: for there, they would attend him at some seasonable time when he should appoint, to receive instruction from him; they would not press rudely upon him, when it was not proper: Civility and good manners well become those who follow Christ: and besides, they hoped to have more from him than they could have in a short conference now by the way. They resolved to make a business not a bye-business of conversing with Christ. Those that have had some communion with Christ cannot but desire, (1.) A further communion with him: they follow on to know more of him. (2.) A fixed communion with him: where they might sit down at his feet, and abide by his instructions: It is not enough to take a turn with Christ now and then, but we must lodge with him.

4. The courteous invitation Christ gave them to his lodgings: *He saith unto them, Come and see*: Thus should good desires towards Christ and communion with him be countenanced. (1.) He invites them to come to his lodgings: the nearer we approach to Christ the more we see of his beauty and excellency. Deceivers maintain their interest in their followers by keeping them at a distance, but that which Christ desired to recommend him to the esteem and affections of his followers was, that they would *come and see*; *come and see* what a mean lodging I have, what poor accommodations I take up with, that you may not expect any worldly advantage by following me, as they did who made their court to the Scribes and Pharisees, and called them Rabbi. *Come and see* what you must count upon if you follow me: See *Matth. viii. 20*. (2.) He invites them to come *presently* and without delay. They asked where he lodged, that they might wait upon him at a more convenient season, but Christ invites them immediately to *come and see*; never in better time than now. Hence learn, (1.) As to others, that it is best taking people when they are in a good mind; strike while the iron is hot. (2.) As to ourselves, that it is wisdom to embrace the present opportunities: *now is the accepted time*, 2 Cor. vi. 2.

5. Their cheerful and (no doubt) thankful acceptance of his invitation; they *came and saw where he dwelt*, and *abode with him that day*. It had been more modesty and manners than had done them good if they had refused this offer. (1.) They readily went along with him; they *came and saw where he dwelt*. Gracious souls cheerfully accept Christ's gracious invitations; as David, *Psal. xxvii. 8*. They inquired not how they might be accommodated with him, but would put that to the venture, and make the best of what they found: It is good being where Christ is, wherever it be. (2.) They were so well pleased with what they found, that they *abode with him that day*: Master, it is good to be here, and he bid them welcome. It was about the tenth hour: Some think that John reckons according to the Roman computation, and that it was about ten o'clock in the morning, and they staid with him till night; others think that John reckons as the other evangelists did, according to the Jewish computation, and that it was four o'clock in the afternoon, and they abode with him that night and the next day. Dr. Lightfoot conjectures that this next day that they spent with Christ was a sabbath-day, and it being late they could not get home before the sabbath. As it is our duty whenever we are to contrive to spend the sabbath as much as may be to our spiritual benefit and advantage: so they are blessed who by the lively exercises of faith, love, and devotion, spend their sabbaths in communion with Christ. These are Lord's days indeed, *days of the Son of man*.

Secondly, Andrew brought his brother Peter to Christ; if Peter had been the first-born of Christ's disciples, the Papists would have made a noise with it; he did indeed afterwards come to be more eminent in gifts, but Andrew had the honour first to be acquainted with Christ, and to be the instrument of bringing Peter to him. Observe,

1. The information which Andrew gave to Peter, with an intimation to come to Christ.

He found him: He first finds his own brother Simon; his finding implies his seeking him. Simon came along with Andrew to attend John's ministry and baptism, and Andrew knew where to look for him. Perhaps the other disciple that was with him, went out to seek some friend of his at the same time, but Andrew sped first, he first findeth Simon, who came only to attend on John, but has his expectations out-done, he meets with Jesus.

2. He told him whom they had found; we have found the Messiah. Observe, (1.) He speaks humbly, not I have found, assuming the honour of the discovery to himself, but we have, rejoicing that he had shared with others in it. (2.) He speaks exultingly and with triumph; we have found that pearl of great price, that true treasure; and have found it, he proclaims it as those lepers, 2 Kings viii. 9. for he knows he shall have never the less in Christ for others sharing. He speaks intelligently: we have found the Messiah, which is more than had yet been said: John had said he is the Lamb of God, and the Son of God, which Andrew compares with the scriptures of the Old Testament, and comparing them together, concludes he is the Messiah promised to the fathers, for it is now that the fulness of time is come: Thus by making God's testimonies his meditation, he speaks more clearly concerning Christ than ever his teacher had done, *Psal. exix. 99*.

3. He brought him to Jesus: would not undertake to instruct him himself, but brought him to the fountain-head, persuaded him to come to Christ, and introduced him. Now this was, (1.) An instance of true love to his brother, his own brother, so he is called here because he was very dear to him. Note, We ought with a particular concern and application, to endeavour for the spiritual welfare of those that are related to us; for their relation to us adds both to the obligation and to the opportunity of doing good to their souls. (2.) It was an effect of his day's conversation with Christ. Note, The best evidence of our profiting by the means of grace, is the piety and usefulness of our conversation afterwards: Hereby it appeared that Andrew had been with Jesus, that he was so full of him, that he had been in the mount, for his face shone. He knew there was enough in Christ for all; and having tasted that he is gracious, could not rest till those he loved had tasted it too. Note, True grace hates monopolies, and loves not to eat its morsels alone.

2. The entertainment that Jesus Christ gave to Peter, who was never the less welcome for his being influenced by his brother to come, *ver. 43*. Observe,

1. Christ called him by his name: When Jesus beheld him, he said, *Thou art Simon, the Son of Jona*. It should seem that Peter was utterly a stranger to Christ, and if so, (1.) It was a proof of Christ's omniscience, that upon the first sight, without any inquiry he could tell the name both of him and of his father: *The Lord knows them that are his*; and their whole case. However, (2.) It was an instance of his condescending grace and favour, that he did thus freely and affably call by his name, though he was of mean extraction, and *vir nullius nominis*. It was an instance of God's favour to Moses that he knew him by name, *Exod. xxxiii. 17*. Some observe the signification of these names, *Simon, obedient, Jona, a dove*. An obedient dove-like spirit qualifies us to be the disciples of Christ.

2. He gave him a new name: Cephas.

1. His giving him a name speaks Christ's favour to him. A new name speaks some great dignity, *Rev. ii. 17. Isa. lxiii*. By this Christ not only wiped off the reproach of his mean and obscure parentage, but adopted him into his family as one of his own.

2. The name which he gave him speaks his fidelity to Christ. *Thou shalt be called Cephas*, that is Hebrew for a stone, which is by interpretation Peter; so it should be rendered, as *Acts ix. 39, Tabbitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas*; the former Hebrew, the latter Greek, for a young roe, Peter's natural temper was stiff and hardy and resolute, which I take to be the principal reason why Christ called him, *Cephas, a stone*. When Christ afterwards prayed for him that his faith might not fail, that so he might be firm to Christ himself, and at the same time bid him strengthen his brethren, and lay out himself for the support of others, then he made him what he here called him, *Cephas, a stone*. Those that come to Christ must come with a fixed resolution to be firm and constant to him, like a stone, solid and stedfast,

and it is by his grace that they are so: His saying, *be thou steady*, makes them so. Now this doth no more prove that Peter was the similar or only rock upon which this church is built, than the calling of James and John *Boanerges*, proves them the only sons of thunder; or the calling of Josiah *Barnabas*, proves him the only son of consolation.

43. ¶ The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. 44. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him; We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. 46. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. 47. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! 48. Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee. 49. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. 50. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. 51. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

We have here the call of Philip and Nathanael.

First, Philip was called immediately to Christ himself, not as Andrew, who was directed to Christ by John; or Peter who was invited by his brother. God has various methods of bringing his chosen ones home to himself. But whatever means he is not tied to any.

1. Philip was called in a preventing way; Jesus findeth Philip, Christ sought us and found us before we made any inquiries after him. The name Philip is of a Greek original, and much used among the Gentiles, which some make an instance of the degeneracy of the Jewish church at this time, and their conformity to the nations; yet Christ changed not his name.

2. He was called the day following: See how closely Christ applied himself to his business. When work is to be done for God, we must not lose a day. Yet observe, Christ now called one or two a day, but after the Spirit was poured out there were thousands a day effectually called, in which was fulfilled *John xiv. 12*.

3. Jesus would go forth into Galilee to call him. Christ will find out all those that are given to him, wherever they are, and none of them shall be lost.

4. Philip was brought to be a disciple by the power of Christ going along with that word, *Follow me*. See the nature of true Christianity; it is following Christ, devoting ourselves to his converse and conduct, attending his motions, and treading in his steps; See the efficacy of the grace of Christ, making the call of his word to prevail; it is the rod of his strength.

5. We are told that Philip was of Bethsaida, and Andrew and Peter were so too, *ver. 44*. These eminent disciples received not honour from, but reflect honour upon the place of their nativity. Bethsaida signifies the house of nets, because inhabited mostly by fishermen; thence Christ chose disciples who were to be furnished with extraordinary gifts, and therefore needed not the ordinary advantages of learning. Bethsaida was a wicked place, *Mat. xi. 21*. yet even there was a remnant, according to the election of grace.

Secondly, Nathanael was invited to Christ by Philip, and much is said concerning him. In which we may observe,

1. What passed between Philip and Nathanael, in which appears an observable mixture of pious zeal with weakness, such as is usually found in beginners, that are yet but asking the way to Zion. Here is,

(1.) The joyful news that Philip brought to Nathanael, *ver. 45*. As Andrew before, so Philip here, having got some knowledge of Christ himself, rests not till he has made manifest the favour of that knowledge. Philip, though newly come to an acquaintance with Christ himself, yet steps aside to seek Nathanael. Note, When we have the fairest opportunities of getting good to our own souls, yet even then we must seek opportunities of doing good to the souls of others; remembering the words of Christ, *It is more blessed to give than to receive*, *Acts xx. 35*. Or, saith Philip, we have found him of whom Moses and the prophets did write. Observe here, (1.) What a transport of joy Philip was in upon this new acquaintance with Christ; we have found him whom we have so often talked of, so long wished and waited for; at last he is come, he is come, and we have found him. (2.) What an advantage it was to him, that he was so well acquainted with the scriptures of the Old Testament, which prepared his mind for the reception of evangelical light, and made the entrance of it much the more easy: *Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write*. What was written intirely and from eternity in the book of the divine counsels, was, in part, at sundry times, and in divers manners copied out into the book of the divine revelation. Glorious things were written there concerning the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, Shiloh, the Prophet like Moses, the Son of David, Emmanuel, the Man, the Branch, Messiah, the Prince: Philip had studied these things and was full of them, which made him readily welcome Christ. (3.) What mistakes and weaknesses he laboured under; he called Christ Jesus of Nazareth, whereas he was of Bethlehem; and the son of Joseph, where he was but his supposed son. Young beginners in religion are subject to mistakes, which time and the grace of God will rectify. It was his weakness to say, *We have found him*, for Christ found them before they found Christ: He did not yet apprehend, as Paul did, how he was apprehended of Christ Jesus, *Phil. iii. 12*.

(2.) The objection which Nathanael made against this; *ver. 46. Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* Here, (1.) His caution was commendable that he did not lightly assent to every thing that was said; but took it into examination; our rule is to prove all things. But, (2.) His objection arose from ignorance. If he meant that no good thing could come of Nazareth, it was owing to his ignorance of the divine grace, as if that were less affected to one place than another, or tied itself to men's foolish and ill-natured observations. If he meant that the Messiah, that great good thing could not come out of Nazareth, so far he was right; Moses, in the law, said that he should come out of Juda, and the prophets had assigned Bethlehem for the place of his nativity, but then he was ignorant of the matter.

matter of fact, that this Jesus was born in Bethlehem; so that the blunder Philip made in calling him Jesus of Nazareth occasioned this objection. Note, The mistakes of preachers often give rise to the prejudices of hearers.

3. The short reply which Philip gave to this objection; *Come and see*, (1.) It was his *weakness*, that he could not give a satisfactory answer to it; yet it is the common case of young beginners in religion: We may know enough to satisfy ourselves, and yet not be able to say enough to silence the cavils of a subtle adversary. (2.) It was his *wisdom* and zeal, that when he could not answer the objection himself, he would have him go to one that could: *Come and see*. Let us not stand arguing here and raising difficulties to ourselves which we cannot get over; let us go and converse with Christ himself, and these difficulties will all vanish presently. Note, It is folly to spend that time in doubtful disputation which might be better spent, and to much better purpose, in the exercises of piety and devotion. *Come and see*, not go and see; but come, and I will go along with thee, *Isa. ii. 3. Jer. i. 5.* From this parley between Philip and Nathanael we may observe, (1.) That many people are kept from the ways of religion by the unreasonable prejudices they have conceived against religion upon the account of some foreign circumstances which do not at all touch the merits of the cause. (2.) The best way to remove those prejudices they have entertained against religion is to prove themselves and make trial of it. Let us not answer this matter before we hear of it.

1. What passed between Nathanael, and our Lord Jesus. He came and saw, not in vain,

1. Our Lord Jesus bore a very honourable testimony to Nathanael's integrity. *Jesus saw him coming and met him with favourable encouragement*; he said of him to those about him, Nathanael himself being within hearing, *Behold an Israelite indeed*. Observe,

1. That he did commend him; not to flatter him or puff him up with a good conceit of himself, but perhaps because he knew him to be a modest man, if not a melancholy man, one that had hard and mean thoughts of himself; was ready to doubt his own sincerity, and Christ by his testimony put the matter out of doubt. Nathanael had more than any of the candidates objected against Christ, but Christ hereby shewed that he excused it, and was not extreme to mark what he said amiss, because he knew his heart was upright. He did not retort upon him, *Can any good thing come out of Cana?* (John xxi. 2.) an obscure town in Galilee, but kindly gives him this character, to encourage us to hope for acceptance with Christ, notwithstanding our weakness, and to teach us to speak honourably of those who without cause have spoken slightly of us, and to give them their due praise.

2. That he commended him for his integrity.

1. *Behold an Israelite indeed*. It is Christ's prerogative to know what men are indeed; we can but hope the best. The whole nation were Israelites in name, but all are not Israel that are of Israel, *Rom. ix. 6.* but here was an Israelite indeed. (1.) A sincere follower of the good example of Israel, whose character it was, that he was a plain man; in opposition to Esau's character of a cunning man. He was a genuine son of honest Jacob, not only of his seed, but of his spirit. (2.) A sincere professor of the faith of Israel; he was true to the religion he professed, and lived up to it; he was really as good as he seemed, and his practice of a piece with his profession. He is a Jew that is one inwardly, *Rom. ii. 29.* so is the Christian.

2. He is one in whom is no guile, this is the character of an Israelite indeed, a Christian indeed. No guile towards men; a man without trick or design; a man that one may trust; no guile towards God, that is sincere in his repentance for sin; sincere in his covenanting with God, in whose spirit is no guile, *Psalm xxxii. 2.* He doth not say without guile, but without guile. Though in many things he is foolish and forgetful; yet in nothing false, nor wickedly departing from God: there is no allowed approved guile in him; not painted, though he have his spots; behold this Israelite indeed. (1.) Take notice of him that you may learn his way, and do like him. (2.) Admire him; behold and wonder. The hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees have so leavened the Jewish church and nation, and their religion was so degenerated into formality or state-policy, that an Israelite indeed was a man wondered at; a miracle of divine grace, like Job, chap. i. 8.

2. Nathanael is much surprised at this, upon which Christ gives him a further proof of his omniscience, and a kind memorial of his formal devotion.

1. Here is Nathanael's modesty, in that he was soon put out of countenance at the kind notice Christ was pleased to take of him. *Whence knowest thou me?* Me that am unworthy of thy cognizance; who am I, O Lord God? *2 Sam. vii. 18.* This was an evidence of his sincerity, that he did not catch at the praise he met with, but declined it. Christ knows us better than we know ourselves; we know not what is in a man's heart by looking in the face, but all things are naked and open before Christ, *Heb. iv. 12, 13.* Doth Christ know us? Let us covet to know him.

(2.) Here is Christ's further manifestation of himself to him; before Philip called thee, I saw thee.

(1.) He gave him to understand that he knew him, and so manifests his divinity. It is God's prerogative infallibly to know all persons and all things; by this Christ proved himself to be God upon many occasions. It was prophesied concerning the Messiah, that he should be of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, i. e. in judging the sincerity and degree of the fear of God in others, and that he should not judge after the sight of his eyes, *Isa. xi. 2, 3.* Here he answers that prediction. See *2 Tim. ii. 19.*

(2.) That before Philip called him, he saw him under the fig-tree; this manifests a particular kindness for him. (1.) His eye was towards him before Philip called him, which was the first time that ever Nathanael was acquainted with Christ; Christ has knowledge of us before we have any knowledge of him, see *Isa. xlv. 4. Gal. iv. 9.* (2.) His eye was upon him when he was under the fig-tree: this was a private token which nobody understood but Nathanael; when thou was retired under the fig-tree in thy garden, and thoughtest no eye saw thee, I had then mine eye upon thee and saw that which was very acceptable. It is most probable Nathanael under the fig-tree was employed, as Isaac in the field; in meditation and prayer and communion with God. Perhaps then and there it was that he solemnly joined himself to the Lord in an inviolable covenant: Christ saw in secret; and by this public notice of it did in part reward him openly. Sitting under the fig-tree denotes quietness and composedness of spirit, which much befriends communion with God: See *Psalm iv. 4. Lach. iii. 10.* Nathanael herein was an Israelite indeed, that, like Israel, he wrestled with God alone, *Gen. xxxii. 24.* prayed, not like the hypocrites in the corners of the streets, but under the fig-tree.

3. Nathanael hereby obtained a full assurance of faith in Jesus Christ, expressed in that noble acknowledgement, ver. 49. *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.* That is, in short, thou art the true Messiah. Observe here,

1. How truly he believed with the heart. Though he had lately laboured under some prejudices concerning Christ, they were now all vanished. Note, The grace of God in working faith casts down imaginations. Now he

asks no more. Can any good thing come out of Nazareth: for he believes Jesus of Nazareth to be the chief good, and embraceth him accordingly.

2. How freely he confessed with the mouth. And his confession is made in form of an adoration, directed to our Lord Jesus himself, which is a proper way of confessing our faith. (1.) He confesseth Christ's prophetic office, in calling him Rabbi, a title which the Jews commonly gave to their teachers: Christ is the great Rabbi, at whose feet we must all be brought up. (2.) He confesseth his divine nature and omission, in calling him the Son of God, that Son of God spoken of, *Psalm ii. 7.* though he had but a human form and aspect, yet having a divine knowledge, the knowledge of the heart, and of things distant and secret, from thence he concludes him to be the Son of God. (3.) He confesseth, *Thou art the King of Israel*; that King of Israel whom we have been long waiting for. If he be the Son of God, he is King of the Israel of God. Nathanael hereby proves himself an Israelite indeed, that he so readily owns and submits to the King of Israel.

4. Christ hereupon raiseth the hopes and expectations of Nathanael to something further and greater than all this, ver. 50, 51. Christ is very tender of young converts, and will encourage good beginnings though weak, *Matt. xii. 20.*

1. He here signifies his acceptance, and (it should seem) his admiration of the ready faith of Nathanael. *Because I said I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou?* He wonders that such a small indication of Christ's divine knowledge should have such an effect; it was a sign Nathanael's heart was prepared before-hand, else the work had not been done so suddenly. Note, It is much for the honour of Christ and his grace, when the heart is surrendered to him at the first summons.

2. He promiseth him much greater helps for the confirmation and increase of his faith than he had had for the first production of it.

1. In general, *Thou shalt see greater things than these*, stronger proofs of my being the Messiah; the miracles of Christ and his resurrection. Note, 1. To him that hath and makes good use of what he hath, more shall be given. 2. Those who truly believe the gospel will find its evidences grow upon them, and will see more and more cause to believe it. 3. Whatever discoveries Christ is pleased to make of himself to his people while they are here in this world, he hath still greater things than these to make known to them; a glory yet further to be revealed.

2. In particular; not thou only, but ye, all you my disciples whose faith this is intended for the confirmation of; ye shall see heaven opened; that is more than telling Nathanael of his being under the fig-tree. This is introduced with a solemn preface, *Verily, verily I say unto you*. This commands both a fixed attention to what is said, as very weighty, and a full assent to it as undoubtedly true, I say it, whose word you may rely upon, *amen, amen*. None used this word at the beginning of a sentence but Christ, though the Jews often used it at the close of a prayer, and sometimes doubled it. It is a solemn asseveration. Christ is called the Amen, *Rev. iii. 14.* and so some take it here, *I the Amen, the Amen, say unto you*. I the faithful witness. Note, The assurances we have of the glory to be revealed are built upon the words of Christ.

Now see what it is that Christ assures them of. Hereafter or within a while, or ere long or from henceforth, ye shall see heaven opened.

1. It is a mean title that Christ here takes to himself, the Son of man: a title frequently applied to him in the gospel, but always by himself. Nathanael had called him the Son of God and king of Israel: He calls himself Son of man, (1.) To express his humility in the midst of the honours done him. (2.) To teach his humanity, which is to be believed as well as his divinity. (3.) To intimate his present state of humiliation, that Nathanael might not expect this King of Israel to appear in external pomp.

2. Yet they are great things he here foretels; ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

1. Some understand it literally, as pointing at some particular event. Either, (1.) There was some vision of Christ's glory, in which this was exactly fulfilled, which Nathanael was an eye-witness of, as Peter and James and John were of his transfiguration. There were many things which Christ did, and those in the presence of his disciples, which were not written, *John xx. 30.* and why not that? Or, (2.) It was fulfilled in the many ministrations of the angels to our Lord Jesus, especially that at his ascension, when heaven was opened to receive him, and the angels ascended and descended to attend him and to do him honour, and this in the sight of the disciples. Christ's ascension was the great proof of his mission, and much confirmed the faith of his disciples, *John vi. 6, 7.* Or, (3.) It may refer to Christ's second coming to judge the world, when the heavens shall be open, and every eye shall see him, and the angels of God shall ascend and descend about him as attendants on him, every one employed, and a busy day it will be: See *2 Thess. i. 10.*

2. Others take it figuratively, as speaking of a state or series of things to commence from henceforth; and so we may understand it, (1.) Of Christ's miracles. Nathanael believed because Christ, as the prophets of old, could tell him things secret; but what is this, Christ is now beginning a dispensation of miracles, much more great and strange than this, as if heaven were opened; and such a power shall be exerted by the Son of man; as if the angels which excel in strength were continually attending his orders. Immediately after this Christ began to work miracles, chap. ii. 31. Or, (2.) Of his mediation; and that blessed intercourse which he hath settled between heaven and earth, which his disciples should by degrees be let into the mystery of. (1.) By Christ as mediator, they shall see heaven opened, that we may enter into the holiest by his blood, *Heb. x. 19, 20.* Heaven opened that by faith we may look in, and at length may go in; may now behold the glory of the Lord, and hereafter enter into the joy of our Lord. And, (2.) They shall see angels ascending and descending upon the Son of man. Through Christ we have communion with and benefit by the holy angels, and things in heaven and things on earth are reconciled and gathered together. Christ is to us as Jacob's ladder, *Gen. xxviii. 12.* by whom angels continually ascend and descend for the good of the saints.

C H A P. II.

In the close of the foregoing chapter we had an account of the first disciples, whom Jesus called, Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathanael. These were the first-fruits to God, and to the Lamb, *Rev. xiv. 4.* Now in this chapter we have, (1.) The story of the first miracle which Jesus wrought, turning water into wine, at Cana of Galilee, ver. 1—11. and his appearing at Capernaum, ver. 12. (2.) The story of the first passover he kept at Jerusalem after he began his public ministry. His driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple, ver. 13—17. and the sign he gave to those who quarrelled with him for it, ver. 18—22: with an account of some almost believers that followed him thereupon for some time, ver. 23, 24, 25. But he knew them too well to put any confidence in them.

1. **A**ND the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the mother of Jesus was there: 2. And both Jesus was called; and his disciples, to the marriage. 3. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. 4. Jesus saith unto her, Woman; what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. 5. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. 6. And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. 7. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. 9. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom: 10. And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. 11. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

We have here the story of Christ's miraculous converting of water into wine at a marriage in Cana of Galilee. There were some few so well disposed as to believe in Christ, and to follow him when he *did no miracle*; yet it was not likely many should be wrought upon till he had something wherewith to answer those that asked, *What sign shewest thou?* He could have wrought miracles before, could have made them the common actions of his life, and the common entertainments of his friends; but miracles being designed for the sacred and solemn seals of his doctrine, he began not to work any till he began to preach his doctrine. Now observe,

First, The occasion of this miracle. Maimonides observes it to be to the honour of Moses, that all the signs he did in the wilderness he did them *upon necessity*; we needed food, he brought us manna, and so did Christ. Observe,

1. The time, the *third day* after he came into Galilee; the evangelist keeps a journal of occurrences, for no day passed without something extraordinary done or said. Our master filled up his time better than his servants do, and never lay down a night complaining, as the Roman emperor did that he had *lost a day*.

2. The place; it was at Cana in Galilee, in the tribe of Asher, Josh. xix. 28. of which before it was said, that he *shall yield royal dainties*, Gen. xlix. 20. Christ began to work miracles in an obscure corner of the country, remote from Jerusalem, which was the public scene of action, to shew that he *sought not honour from men*, John v. 41. but would put honour upon the lowly. His doctrine and miracles would not be so much opposed by the plain honest Galileans, as they would be by the proud and prejudiced rabbins, politicians and grandees of Jerusalem.

3. The occasion itself was a *marriage*; probably one or both of the parties were taken to our Lord Jesus. The mother of Jesus is said to be *there*, and not to be *called*, as Jesus and his disciples were, which intimates that she was there as one at home. Observe the honour which Christ hereby put upon the ordinance of marriage, that he graced the solemnity of it, not only with his presence, but with his first miracle, because it was instituted and blessed in innocency; because by it he would still *seek a godly seed*; because it resembles the mystical union between him and his church; and because he foresaw that in the papal kingdom, while the marriage ceremony would be unduly dignified, and advanced into a sacrament, the married state would be unduly vilified, as inconsistent with any sacred function. There was a marriage *supper*, a marriage-feast, to grace the solemnity: marriages were usually celebrated with festivals, Gen. xxix. 22. Judges xiv. 10. in token of joy and friendly respect, and for the confirming of love.

4. Christ and his mother and disciples were principal guests at this entertainment. The mother of Jesus (that was her most honourable title) *was there*; no mention being made of Joseph, we conclude him dead before this; Jesus was *called* and he came, accepted the invitation, and feasted with them, to teach us to be *respectful* to our relations and *sociable* with them, though they be mean. Christ was to come in a way different from that of John Baptist, who came *neither eating nor drinking*, Matt. xi. 18, 19. It is the wisdom of the prudent to study how to *improve* conversation rather than how to *decline* it.

There was a marriage, and Jesus was called. Note, 1. It is very desirable, when there is a marriage, to have Jesus Christ present at it; to have his spiritual gracious presence, to have the marriage owned and blessed by him, the marriage is then *honourable* indeed: and they that marry in the Lord (1 Cor. vii. 39.) do not marry *without him*. 2. They that would have Christ with them at their marriage, must invite him by prayer; that is the messenger that must be sent to heaven for him; and he will come, *thou shalt call, and I will answer*. And he will turn the water into wine.

The disciples also were invited, those five whom he had called, chap. 1. for as yet he had no more; they were his family, and were invited with him. They had thrown themselves upon his care, and they soon find though he had no wealth, he had good friends. Note, (1.) Those that follow Christ shall feast with him; they shall fare as he fares, so he has bespoken for him, John xii. 26. *Where I am, there shall my servant be*. (2.) Love to Christ is testified by a love to those that are his for his sake; *our goodness extendeth not to him but to the saints*. Calvin observes how generous the maker of the feast was, though he seems to be but of small substance, to invite four or five strangers more than he thought of, because they were followers of Christ, which shews, saith he, there is more of freedom and liberality and true friendship in the conversation of some meaner persons than among many of higher rank.

Secondly, The miracle itself. In which observe,

1. They wanted wine, ver. 3. (1.) There was *want* at a feast; though much provided, yet all spent. While we are in this world we sometimes find ourselves in *straits*, even then when we think ourselves in the *fullness* of our sufficiency. If always *spending*, perhaps all is spent ere we are aware. (2.) There was want at a marriage-feast. Note, They that being married are come to care for things of the world, must expect trouble in the flesh; and count upon disappointment. (3.) It should seem the occasion of this want

was Christ and his disciples, because there were more company than they expected when the provision was made; but they who straiten themselves for Christ shall not lose by him.

2. The mother of Jesus solicited him to assist her friends in this strait. We are told, ver. 3, 4, 5, what passed between Christ and his mother upon this occasion.

1. She acquaints him with the plunge they were at, ver. 3. *She said unto him, They have no wine*. Some think she did not expect from him any miraculous supply, he having as yet wrought no miracle, but that she would have him make some decent excuse to the company, and make the best of it to save the bridegroom's reputation, and keep him in countenance. Or, (as Calvin suggests) would have him make up the want of wine with some holy profitable discourse; but most probably she looked for a miracle; for she knew he was now appearing as the great prophet, like unto Moses, who so often seasonably supplied the wants of Israel; and though this was his first public miracle, perhaps he had sometimes relieved her and her husband in their low estate. The bridegroom might have sent out for more wine, but she was for going to the fountain-head. Note, (1.) We ought to be concerned for the wants and straits of our friends, and not seek our own things only. (2.) In our own and our friends straits it is our wisdom and duty to apply ourselves to Christ by prayer. (3.) In our addresses to Christ we must not prescribe to him, but humbly spread our case before him, and then refer ourselves to him to do as he pleaseth.

2. He gave her a reprimand for it, for he saw more amiss in it than we do, else he had not treated it thus.

Here is, 1. The rebuke itself, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* As many as Christ loves he rebukes and chastens. He calls her *woman*, not *mother*: when we begin to be assuming, we should be minded what we are, *men and women*, frail, foolish, and corrupt. The question, *τί ποῦ εἶ δὲ*, might be read, *what is that to me and thee?* what is it to us if they do want? but it is always used as we render it, *What have I to do with thee?* as Judges xi. 12. 2 Sam. xvi. 10. Ezra iv. 3. Matt. viii. 29. And therefore speaks a resentment, yet not at all inconsistent with that reverence and subjection which he paid to his mother, according to the fifth commandment, Luke ii. 51. for there was a time when it was Levi's praise, that he said to his father, *I have not known him*, Deut. xxxiii. 9. Now this was intended to be, (1.) A check to his mother for interposing in a matter which was the act of his Godhead, which had no dependence on her, and which she was not the mother of. Though as man he was David's son, and hers; yet as God, he was David's Lord, and hers, and he would have her know it. The greatest advancements must not make us forget ourselves and our place, nor the familiarity which the covenant of grace admits us to breed contempt, irreverence, or any kind or degree of presumption. (2.) It was an instruction to others of his relations, many of whom were present here, that they must never expect him to have any regard to his kindred according to the flesh in his working miracles, or that therein he should gratify them, who in this matter were no more to him than other people. In the things of God we must not *know faces*. (3.) It is a standing testimony against that idolatry which he foresaw his church would in after-ages sink into, in giving undue honours to the virgin Mary: a crime which the Roman catholics, as they call themselves, are notoriously guilty of when they call her the *queen of heaven*, the *salvation of the world*, their *mediatrix*, their *life and hope*; not only depending upon her merit and intercession, but beseeching her to command her Son to do them good; *Monstra te esse matrem*.—*Jassa matris impera salvatori*. Doth he not here expressly say, when a miracle was to be wrought, even in the days of his humiliation, and his mother did but tacitly hint an intercession, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* which was plainly designed either to prevent or aggravate such gross idolatry, such horrid blasphemy. The Son of God is appointed our advocate with the Father, but the mother of our Lord was never designed to be our advocate with the Son.

2. The reason of this rebuke; *Mine hour is not yet come*; for every thing Christ did, and that was done to him, he had his *hour*, the fixed time, and the fittest time, which was punctually observed. (1.) *Mine hour for working miracles* is not yet come; yet afterwards he wrought this, before the hour, because he foresaw it would confirm the faith of his infant disciples, ver. 11. which was the end of all his miracles: so that this was an earnest of the many miracles he would work when his *hour was come*. (2.) *Mine hour of working miracles openly is not yet come*, therefore do not talk of it thus publicly. (3.) *Is not the hour* of my exemption from thine authority yet come, now I have begun to act as a prophet? So Gregory Nyssen. (4.) *Mine hour of working this miracle* is not yet come. His mother moved him to help them *when the wine began to fail*, so it may be read, ver. 2. But his hour was not yet come till it was quite spent, and there was a *total want*; not only to prevent any suspicion of mixing some of the wine that was left with the water, but to teach us that man's extremity is God's opportunity to appear for the help and relief of his people. Then his *hour is come*, when we are reduced to the utmost strait, and know not what to do. This encouraged those that waited for him, to believe, that though his hour was not yet come, it would come. Note, The delays of mercy are not to be construed the denials of prayer. *At the end it shall speak*.

3. Notwithstanding this, she encouraged herself with the expectation that he would help her friends in this strait, for she bid the servants observe his orders, ver. 5.

1. She took the reproof very submissively, and did not reply to it. It is best not to deserve reproof from Christ, but next best to be meek and quiet under it, and to count it a kindness, Psalm cxli. 5.

2. She kept her hope in Christ's mercy, that he would yet grant her desire. When we come to God in Christ for any mercy, two things discourage us. (1.) Sense of our own follies and infirmities; surely such imperfect prayers as ours cannot speed. (2.) Sense of our Lord's frowns and rebukes; afflictions are continued, deliverances delayed, and God seems angry at our prayers; this was the case of the mother of our Lord here, and yet she encouraged herself with hope, that he will at length give in an answer of peace; to teach us to wrestle with God by faith and fervency in prayer, even then when he seems in his providence to walk contrary to us. We must *against hope believe in hope*, Rom. iv. 18.

3. She directed the servants to have an eye to him immediately, and not to make their applications to her, as it is probable they had done. She quits all pretensions to an influence upon him or intercession with him; let their souls wait only on him, Psalm lxii. 5.

4. She directed them punctually to observe his orders, without disputing or asking questions. Being conscious to herself of a fault in prescribing to him, she cautions the servants to take heed of the same fault, and to attend both his time and his way for supply; *Whatsoever he saith unto you do it*, though you may think it never so improper. If he saith, Give the guests water when they call for wine, do it. If he saith, Pour out from the bottoms of the vessels that are spent, do it: He can make a few drops of wine multiply to so many draughts. Note, Those that expect Christ's favours must with an implicit obedience observe his orders. The way of duty is the way to mercy; and Christ's methods must not be objected against.

4. Christ did at length miraculously supply them, for he is often better than his word, but never worse.

1. The miracle itself was *turning water into wine*. The substance of water acquiring a new form, and having all the accidents and qualities of wine: Such a *transformation* is a *miracle*. But the popish *transubstantiation*, the substance changed, but the accidents remaining the same, is a monster. By this Christ shewed himself to be the God of nature, who maketh the earth to bring forth wine, *Psaln civ. 14, 15*. The extracting the blood of the grape every year from the moisture of the earth is no less a work of power, though being according to the common law of nature, it is not such a work of wonder as this. The beginning of Moses's miracles was turning water into blood, *Exod. iv. 9. chap. vii. 20*. the beginning of Christ's miracles was turning water into wine; which intimates the difference between the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ. The course of the law turns water into blood, common comforts into bitterness and terror; the blessing of the gospel turns water into wine; Christ hereby shewed that his errand into the world was to heighten and improve greater comforts to all believers, and make them comforts indeed. Shiloh is said to *wash his garments in wine*, *Gen. xlix. 11*. the water for washing being *turned into wine*. And the gospel call is, *Come ye to the waters, and buy wine*, *Isa. lv. 1*.

2. The circumstances of it magnified it and freed it from all suspicion of cheat or collusion: For,

1. It was done in water-pots, *ver. 6*. *There were set there six water-pots of stone*. Observe, (1.) For what use these water-pots were intended, *viz.* for their legal purifications from ceremonial pollutions, enjoined by the law of God; and many more by the tradition of the elders; the Jews eat not except they wash often, *Mark vii. 3*. and they used much water in their washing, for which reason here were six large water-pots provided. It was a saying among them, *Qui multâ utitur aquâ in lavando pultus consequetur in hoc mundo dititias*. (2.) To what use Christ put them, quite different from what they were intended; to be the receptacles of the miraculous wine. Thus Christ came to bring in the grace of the gospel, which is as *wine*, that cheereth God and man, *Judg. ix. 13*. Instead of the shadows of the law, which were as water, *weak and beggarly elements*. These were *water-pots* that had never been used to have wine in them; and of *stone*, which is apt not to retain the scent of former liquors, if ever they had had wine in them. They contained *two or three firkins apiece*; two or three measures, *baths or ephahs*; the quantity is uncertain, but very considerable. We may be sure it was not intended to be all drunk at this feast, but for a further kindness to the new-married couple, as the multiplied oil was to the poor widow, out of which she might pay her debt, and live of the rest, *2 Kings iv. 7*. Christ gives like himself; gives abundantly, according to his riches in glory. It is the penman's language to say, they contained *two or three firkins*, for the holy Spirit could have ascertained just how much; thus *John vi. 19*. to teach us to speak cautiously, and not confidently of those things whereof we have not good assurance.

2. The water-pots were filled up to the brim by the servants at Christ's word, *ver. 7*. As Moses, the servant of the Lord, when God bid him, went to the rock to draw water; so these servants, when Christ bid them, went to the water to fetch wine. Note, Since no difficulties can be opposed to the arm of God's power, no improbabilities are to be objected against the word of his command.

3. The miracle was wrought suddenly, and in such a manner as greatly magnified it. As soon as they had filled the water-pots presently, he saith, *Draw out now*, *ver. 8*. it was done,

(1.) Without any ceremony in the eye of the spectators. One would have thought, as Naaman, he should have come out and stood, and called on the name of God, *2 Kings v. 11*. No, he sits still in his place, saith not a word, but wills the thing and so works it. Note, Christ doth great things and marvellous without noise, works manifest changes in a hidden way. Sometimes Christ, in working miracles, used words and signs, but it was for their sakes that stood by, *John xi. 47*.

(2.) Without any hesitation or uncertainty in his own breast. He did not say, *Draw out now*, and let me taste it, questioning whether the thing were done as he willed it or no, but with the greatest assurance imaginable, though it was his first miracle, he recommends it to the master of the feast first. As he knew what he would do, so he knew what he could do, and makes no essay in his work; but all good, very good, even in the beginning.

Our Lord Jesus directed the servants,

1. To draw it out; not let it alone in the vessel to be admired, but draw it out to be drunk. Note, (1.) Christ's works are all for use; he gives no man a talent to be buried but to be traded with. Has he turned thy water into wine, given thee knowledge and grace; it is to profit withal, and therefore, draw out now. (2.) Those that would know Christ must make trial of him; must attend upon him in the use of ordinary means, and then may expect extraordinary influences. That which is laid up for all that fear God is wrought for those that trust in him, *Psaln xxxiii. 19*. that by the exercise of faith draw out what is laid up.

2. To present it to the governor of the feast. Some think this governor of the feast was only the chief guest, that sat at the upper end of the table; and if so, sure our Lord Jesus should have had that place, for he was upon all accounts the principal guest; but it seems another had the uppermost room, probably one that loved it, *Matt. xxiii. 6*. and chose it, *Luke xiv. 7*. And Christ, according to his own rule, sat down in the lowest room; but though he was not treated as the master of the feast, he kindly approved himself a friend to the feast, and if not its founder, yet its best benefactor. Others think this governor was the inspector and monitor of the feast. The same with Plutarch's *Symposiarcha*, whose office it was to see that each had enough and none did exceed, and that there were no indecencies or disorders. Note, Feasts have need of governors, because too many, when they are at a feast, have not the government of themselves. Some think this governor was the *chaplân*, some priest or Levite that craved a blessing, and gave thanks, and Christ would have the cup brought to him that he might bless it, and bless God for it; for the extraordinary tokens of Christ's presence and power were not to supersede or jostle out the ordinary rules and methods of piety and devotion.

4. The wine which was thus miraculously provided was of the best and richest wine, which was acknowledged by the governor of the feast; and that it was really so, and not his fancy, is certain, because he knew not whence it was, *ver. 9, 10*. (1.) It was certain this was wine. The governor knew that when he drank it, though he knew not whence it was; the servants knew whence it was, but had not yet tasted it. If the taster had seen the drawing of it, or the drawers had had the tasting of it, something might have been imputed to fancy; but now no room is left for suspicion. (2.) That it was the best wine. Note, Christ's works commend themselves, even to those that know not their author. The products of miracles were always the best in their kind. This wine had a *stranger body*, and better flavour than ordinary. This the governor of the feast takes notice of to the bridegroom, with an air of pleasantness, as *incomprehension*. (1.) The common method was otherwise. Good wine is brought out to the best advantage

at the beginning of a feast, when the guests have their heads clear, and their appetites fresh, and can relish it, and will commend it; but when they have well drunk, when their heads are muddy, and their appetites palled, good wine is but thrown away upon them, worse will serve them: See the vanity of all the pleasures of sense, they soon surfeit, but never satisfy; the longer they are enjoyed, the less pleasant they grow. (2.) This bridegroom obliged his friends with a reserve of the best wine for the grace-cup. Thou hast kept the good wine until now; not knowing whom they were indebted to for this good wine, he returns the thanks of the table to the bridegroom. She did not know that I gave her corn and wine, *Hos. ii. 8*.

Now, 1. Christ, in providing thus plentifully for the guests, though he hereby allows a sober cheerful use of wine, especially in times of rejoicing, *Neh. viii. 10*. yet he doth not invalidate his own caution, nor invade it in the least, which is, that our hearts be not at any time, no not at a marriage-feast, over-charged with surfeiting and drunkenness, *Luke xxi. 34*. When Christ provided so much good wine for them that had well drunk; he intended to try their sobriety, and to teach them how to abound, as well as how to want. Temperance per force, is a thankless virtue, but if divine providence gives us abundance of the delights of sense, and divine grace enable us to use them moderately, this is self-denial that is praise-worthy. He also intended that some should be left for the confirmation of the truth of the miracle to the faith of others. And we have reason to think that the guests at this table were so well taught, or at least were now so well awed by the presence of Christ, that none of them abused this wine to excess. And those two considerations drawn from this story, may be sufficient at any time to fortify us against temptations to intemperance. (1.) That our meat and drink are the gifts of God's bounty to us, and we owe our liberty to use them, and our comfort in the use of them, to the mediation of Christ; it is therefore ungrateful and impious to abuse them. (2.) That wherever we are Christ has his eye upon us; we should eat bread before God, *Exod. xviii. 12*. and then we should not feed ourselves without fear.

2. He hath given us a specimen of the method he takes in dealing with those that deal with him, which is to reserve the best for the last, and therefore they must deal upon trust. The recompence of their services and sufferings is reserved for the other world; it is a glory to be revealed. The pleasures of sin give their colour in the cup, but at the last bite; but the pleasures of religion will be pleasures for evermore.

In the conclusion of this story, *ver. 11*. we are told,

1. That this was the beginning of miracles which Jesus did. Many miracles have been wrought concerning him at his birth and baptism, and he himself was the greatest miracle of all; but this was the first that was wrought by him. He could have wrought miracles when he disputed with the doctors, but his hour was not come. He had the power, but there was a time of the hiding of his power.

1. That herein he manifested his glory; hereby he proved himself to be the Son of God, and his glory to be that of the only begotten of the Father. He also discovered the nature and end of his office; the power of a God, and the grace of a Saviour appearing in all his miracles, and particularly in this, manifested the glory of the long-expected Messiah.

4. That his disciples believed on him. Those whom he had called, *chap. i*. who had seen no miracle, and yet followed him, now saw this, shared in it, and had their faith strengthened by it. Note, 1. Even the faith that is true at first is but weak. The strongest men were once babes, so were the strongest Christians. 2. The manifesting of the glory of Christ is the great confirmation of the faith of Christians.

12. ¶ After this he went down to Capernaum, he and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples, and they continued there not many days. 13. ¶ And the Jews passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, 14. And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting; 15. And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; 16. And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandize. 17. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. 18. ¶ Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? 19. Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20. Then said the Jews, forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21. But he spake of the temple of his body. 22. When therefore he was risen from the dead his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

Here we have,

First, The short visit Christ made to Capernaum, *ver. 12*. It was a large and populous city, about a day's journey from Cana; it is called his own city, *Matt. ix. 1*. because he made it his head quarters in Galilee, and what little rest he had was there. It was a place of concourse, and therefore Christ chose it, that the fame of his doctrine and miracles might from thence spread the further. Observe,

1. The company that attended him thither. His mother, his brethren, and his disciples. Wherever Christ went, 1. He would not go alone, but would take those with him who had put themselves under his conduct, that he might instruct them, and they might attest his miracles. 2. He could not go alone, but they would follow him, because they liked the sweetness either of his doctrine or of his wine, *John vi. 26*. His mother, though he had lately given her to understand, that in the works of his ministry he should pay no more respect to her than to any other person, yet followed him; not to intercede with him, but to learn of him. His brethren also and relations, that were at the marriage, and were wrought upon by the miracle there; and his disciples, who attended him wherever he went. It should seem, people were more affected with Christ's miracles at first than they were afterwards, when custom made them seem less strange.

2. His continuance there, which was at this time not many days, designing now only to begin the acquaintance he would afterwards improve there. Christ

Christ was still upon the remove, would not confine his usefulness to one place, because many needed him. And he would teach his followers to look upon themselves but as sojourners in this world; and his ministers to follow their opportunities, and go where their work led them. We do not now find Christ in the synagogues, but he privately instructed his friends, and thus entered upon his work by degrees: It is good for young ministers to accustom themselves to pious and edifying discourse in private, that they may with the better preparation and greater awe approach their public work. He did not stay long at Capernaum, because the passover was at hand, and he must attend it at Jerusalem, for every thing is beautiful in its season. The less good must give way to the greater; and all the dwellings of Jacob must vail to the gates of Zion.

Secondly, The passover he kept at Jerusalem; it is the first after his baptism and the evangelist takes notice of all the passovers he kept henceforward, which were four in all, the fourth, that at which he suffered; three years after this, and half a year, was now past since his baptism. Christ being made under the law, observed the passover at Jerusalem; see *Exod. xxiii. 17*. Thus he taught us by his example a strict observance of divine institutions, and a diligent attendance on religious assemblies. He went up to Jerusalem when the passover was at hand, that he might be there with the first. It is called the *Jesus passover*, because it was peculiar to them; Christ is our passover; now shortly God will no longer own it for his. Christ kept the passover at Jerusalem yearly, ever since he was twelve years old, in obedience to the law; but now he is entered upon his public ministry, we may expect something more from him than before; and two things we are here told he did there.

1. He purged the temple, ver. 14—17. Observe here,

1. The first place we find him in at Jerusalem was the temple, and it should seem he did not make any public appearance till he came thither; for his presence and preaching there, was that glory of the latter house, which was to exceed the glory of the former, *Hag. ii. 9*. It was foretold, *Mal. iii. 1*: *I will send my messenger, John Baptist; he never preached in the temple, but the Lord whom ye seek, he shall suddenly come to his temple*, suddenly after the appearing of John Baptist; so that this was the time, and the temple the place when and where the Messiah was to be expected.

2. The first work we find him in at the temple, was the purging of it, for so it was foretold there, *Mal. iii. 2, 3*. *He shall sit as a refiner, and purify the sons of Levi*. Now was come the time of reformation, Christ came to be the great reformer; and according to the method of the reforming kings of Judah, he first purged out what was amiss, (and that used to be passover work too, as in Hezekiah's time, *2 Chron. xxx. 14, 15*, and Josiah's, *2 Kings xxiii. 4*, &c.) and then taught them to do well; first purged out the old leaven, and then keep the feast. Christ's design in coming into the world, was to reform the world, and he expects that all who come to him should reform their hearts and lives, *Gen. xxxv. 2*. And this he has taught us by purging the temple.

See here, 1. What were the corruptions that were to be purged out. He found a market in one of the courts of the temple, that which was called the court of the Gentiles within the mountain of that house. There, (1.) They sold oxen, and sheep, and doves for sacrifice, we will suppose not for common use, but for the convenience of those who came out of the country, and could not bring their sacrifices in specie along with them, see *Deut. xiv. 24, 25, 26*. This market perhaps had been kept by the pool of Bethesda, *chap. v. 2* but was admitted into the temple by the chief priests, for filthy lucre; for, no doubt, the rents for standing there, and fees for searching the beasts sold there, and certifying that they were without blemish, would be a considerable revenue to them. Great corruptions in the church owe their rise to the love of money, *1 Tim. vi. 5, 10*. (2.) They changed money, for the convenience of those that were to pay a half-shekel in specie every year, by way of poll, for the service of the tabernacle, *Exod. xxx. 12*, and no doubt they got by it.

2. What course our Lord took to purge out those corruptions. He had seen these in the temple formerly, when he was in a private station, but never went about to drive them out till now, when he had taken upon him the public character of a prophet. He did not complain to the chief priests, for he knew they countenanced those corruptions. But he himself,

1. Drove out the sheep and oxen, and those that sold them, out of the temple. He never used force to drive any into the temple, but only to drive those out that profaned it; He did not seize the sheep and oxen for himself, did not detain and impound them, though he found them *damage faisant*, actual trespassers upon his Father's ground, but only drove them out and their owners with them: he made a scourge of small cords, which probably they had led their sheep and oxen with, and thrown them away upon the ground, thence Christ gathered them. Sinners prepare the scourges, with which they themselves will be driven out from the temple of the Lord. He did not make a scourge to chastise the offenders, his punishments are of another nature, but only to drive out the cattle; he aimed no further than at reformation. See *Rom. xiii. 3, 4*. *2 Cor. x. 8*.

2. He poured out the changers' money, *to kick*. The small money. The *Nummorum Famulus*. In pouring out the money, he shewed his contempt of it, he threw it to the ground, to the earth as it was. In overthrowing the tables he shewed his displeasure against those that make religion a matter of worldly gain. Money-changers in the temple are the scandal of it. Note, In reformation it is good to make thorough work; he drove them all out; and not only threw out the money, but in over-turning the tables, threw out the trade too.

3. He said to them that sold doves (sacrifices for the poor) take these things hence. The doves, though they took up less room, and were a less nuisance than the oxen and sheep, yet must not be allowed there. The sparrows and swallows were welcome, that were left to God's providence, *Psal. lxxxiv. 3*, but not the doves that were appropriated to man's profit. God's temple must not be made a pigeon-house. But see Christ's prudence in his zeal. When he drove out the sheep and oxen, the owners might follow them; when he poured out the money, they might gather it up again; but if he had turned the doves flying, perhaps they could not have been retrieved; therefore to them that sold doves, he said, take these things hence. Note, Discretion must always guide and govern our zeal, that we do nothing unbefitting ourselves, or mischievous to others.

4. He gave them a good reason for what he did, *Make not my father's house a house of merchandise*. Reason for conviction should accompany force for correction.

1. Here is a reason why they should not profane the temple; because it was the house of God, and not to be made a house of merchandise. Merchandise is a good thing in the exchange, but not in the temple. This was, (1.) To alienate that which was dedicated to the honour of God; it was sacrilege; it was robbing God. (2.) It was to debase that which was solemn and awful, and to make it mean. (3.) It was to disturb and distract those services, in which men ought to be most solemn, serious, and intent. It was particularly an affront to the sons of the stranger, in their worship to be forced to herd themselves with the sheep and oxen, and to be distracted in their worship with the noise of a market, for this market was kept in the court of

the Gentiles. (4.) It was to make the business of religion subservient to a secular interest; for the holiness of the place must advance the market, and promote the sale of their commodities. Those make God's house a house of merchandise, (1.) Whose minds are filled with cares about worldly business, when they are attending on religious exercises, as those, *Amos viii. 5*. *Ezek. xxxiii. 31*. (2.) Who perform divine offices for filthy lucre, and sell the gifts of the Holy Ghost; *Acts viii. 18*.

2. Here is a reason why he was concerned to purge it; because it is my Father's house. And, (1.) Therefore he had authority to purge it, for he was faithful as a son over his own house, *Heb. iii. 5, 6*. In calling God his father, he intimates that he was the Messiah, of whom it was said, *He shall build a house for my name, and I will be his father*, *2 Sam. vii. 12, 13*. (2.) Therefore he had a zeal in the purging of it. It is my Father's house, and therefore I cannot bear to see it profaned, and him dishonoured.

Note, If God be our father in heaven, and therefore it be our desire that his name may be sanctified, it cannot but be our grief to see it polluted.

Christ's purging the temple thus may justly be reckoned among his wonderful works; *Inter omnia signa quae fecit Dominus, hoc mihi videtur esse mirabilissimum*. Hieron. Considering, 1. That he did it, without the assistance of any of his friends; probably it had been no hard matter to have raised the mob, who had a great veneration for the temple, against these profaners of it, but Christ never countenanced any thing that was tumultuous or disorderly. There was none to uphold, but his own arm did it. 2. That he did it without the resistance of any of his enemies, either the market-people themselves, or the chief priests that gave them their licences, and had the *Posse Templi* at their command. But the corruption was too plain to be justified; sinners own consciences are reformers best friends; yet that was not all, there was a divine power put forth herein, a power over the spirits of men; and in this non-resistance of theirs that scripture was fulfilled, *Mal. iii. 2, 3*. *Who shall stand, when he appears?*

Lastly, Here is the remark which his disciples made upon it, ver. 17. *They remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up*. They were somewhat surprised at first, to see him whom they were directed to as the Lamb of God in such a heat: and him whom they believed to be the King of Israel, take so little state upon him as to do this himself; but one scripture came to their thoughts, which taught them to reconcile this action both with the meekness of the Lamb of God, and with the majesty of the King of Israel, for David speaking of the Messiah takes notice of his zeal for God's house, as so great that it even eat him up, it made him forget himself, *Psal. lxxix. 9*. Observe,

1. The disciples came to understand the meaning of what Christ did, by remembering the scriptures. *They remembered now that it was written*. Note, The word of God and the works of God do mutually explain and illustrate each other. Dark scriptures are expounded by their accomplishment in providence, and difficult providences are made easy by comparing them with the scriptures. See of what great use it is to the disciples of Christ, to be ready and mighty in the scriptures, and to have their memories well stored with scripture truths, by which they will be furnished for every good work.

2. The scripture they remembered was very apposite; *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up*. David was in this a type of Christ, that he was zealous for God's house, *Psal. cxxxii. 2, 3*. What he did for it was with all his might, see *1 Chron. xxix. 2*, the latter part of that verse, *Psal. lxxix. 9* is applied to Christ, *Rom. xv. 3*, as the former part of it here. All the graces that were to be found among the Old Testament saints, were eminently in Christ, and particularly this of zeal for the house of God, and in them as they were patterns to us, so they were types of him. Observe, 1. Jesus Christ was zealously affected to the house of God, his church, loved it, and was always zealous for its honour and welfare. 2. This zeal did even eat him up; it made him humble himself, and spend himself, and expose himself. *My zeal has consumed me*, *Psal. cxix. 139*. Zeal for the house of God forbids us to consult our own credit, ease, and safety, when they come in competition with our duty and Christ's service, and sometimes carries on our souls in our duty so far, and so fast, that our bodies cannot keep pace with them, and makes us as deaf as our Master was to those who suggested, *spare thyself*. The grievances here redressed might seem but small, and such as should have been connived at; but such was Christ's zeal, that he could not bear even them that sold and bought in the temple; *Si ibi christus inveniret quid saceret Dominus?* saith St. Austin: "If he had found drunkards in the temple, how much more would he have been displeased?"

2. Christ having thus purged the temple, gave a sign to those who demanded it, to prove his authority for so doing. Observe here,

1. Their demand of a sign. *Then answered the Jews, i. e. the multitude of the people with their leaders*. Being Jews, they should rather have stood by him, and assisted him to vindicate the honour of their temple; but instead of that, they objected against it. Note, They who apply themselves in good earnest to the work of reformation, must expect to meet with opposition. And when they could object nothing against the thing itself, they questioned his authority to do it, *What sign shewest thou unto us*, to prove thyself authorised and commissioned to do these things? It was indeed a good work to purge the temple: but what had he to do to undertake it, who was in no office there? They looked upon it as an act of jurisdiction, and that he must prove himself a prophet, *yea more than a prophet*. But was not the thing itself sign enough? His ability to drive so many from their posts without opposition, was a proof of his authority; he that was armed with such a divine power, sure was armed with a divine commission. *What ailed these buyers and sellers that they fled? that they were driven back?* Surely it was at the presence of the Lord, *Psal. cxiv. 5—7*, no less a presence.

2. Christ's answer to this demand, ver. 19. He did not immediately work a miracle to convince them, but gives them a sign in something to come, the truth of which must appear by the event, according to *Deut. xviii. 21*.

Now, 1. The sign that he gives them is, his own death and resurrection. He refers them to that which would be, (1.) His last sign. If they would not be convinced by what they saw and heard, let them wait. (2.) The great sign to prove him to be the Messiah; for concerning him it was foretold that he should be bruised, *Isa. liii. 5*, cut off, *Dan. ix. 26*, and yet that he should not see corruption, *Psal. xvi. 10*. These things were fulfilled in the blessed Jesus, and therefore, truly he was the Son of God, and had authority in the temple, his Father's house.

2. He foretels his death and resurrection not in plain terms, as he often did to his disciples, but in figurative expressions; as afterwards when he gave this for a sign, he called it the sign of the prophet Jonas: so here *destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*. Thus spake he to them, who were willingly ignorant, in parables, that they might not perceive, *Matt. xiii. 13*. They that will not see, shall not see. Nay this figurative speech used here, proved such a stumbling block to them, that it was produced in evidence against him at his trial to prove him a blasphemer, *Matt. xxvi. 60, 61*. Had they humbly asked him the meaning of what he said, he would have told them, and it had been a savour of life unto life to them, but they were resolved to cavil, and it proved a savour of death unto death. They

They that would not be convinced were hardened, and the manner of the expression of this prediction occasioned the accomplishment of the prediction itself.

(1.) He foretells his death by the Jews malice, in these words, *destroy ye this temple*, i. e. ye will destroy it, I know ye will. I will permit you to destroy it. Note, Christ, even at the beginning of his ministry, had a clear foresight of all his sufferings at the end of it, and yet went on cheerfully in it. It is good at *setting out* to expect the worst.

(2.) He foretells his resurrection by his own power, in *three days I will raise it up*. There were others that were raised, but Christ raised himself, resumed his own life.

Now he chose to express this by *destroying and re-edifying* the temple, (1.) Because he was now to justify himself in purging the temple, which they had profaned, *q. d.* you that defile one temple will destroy another, and I will prove my authority to *purge* what you have defiled, by *raising* what you will *destroy*. The profaning of the temple is the *destroying* of it, and its reformation its *resurrection*. (2.) Because the death of Christ was indeed the destruction of the Jewish temple, the procuring cause of it; and his resurrection was the raising up of another temple, the gospel church, *Zech. vi. 12*. The ruins of their place and nation, *John xi. 48*. were the riches of the world. See *Amos ix. 11. Acts xv. 16*.

3. Their cavil at this answer, *ver. 20. Forty-six years was this temple in building*. Temple-work was always slow work, and couldst thou make such quick work of it? Now here, (1.) They shew some knowledge, they could tell how long the temple was in building. Dr. Lightfoot computes that it was just 46 years from the founding Zerubbabel's temple, in the second year of Cyrus, to the complete settlement of the temple-service, in the 32d year of Artaxerxes; and also, that from Herod's beginning to build this temple, in the 18th year of his reign to this very time, when the Jews said this, was just 46 years; forty and six years, *andopara*, *hath this temple been built*. (2.) They shew more ignorance, (1.) Of the meaning of Christ's words. Note, Men often run into gross mistakes, by understanding that literally which the scripture speaks figuratively; what abundance of mischief has been done by interpreting, *this is my body*, after a corporal and carnal manner! (2.) Of the almighty power of Christ, as if he could do no more than another man. Had they known that this was he who *built all things* in six days, they would not have made it such an absurdity, that he should build a temple in three days.

4. A vindication of Christ's answer from their cavil. The difficulty is soon solved by explaining the terms; *he spake of the temple of his body*, *ver. 21*. Though Christ had discovered a great respect for the temple in *purging* it, yet he will have us know, that the holiness of it, which he was so jealous for, was but *typical*, and leads us to the consideration of another temple, which that was but a shadow of, the substance being Christ, *Ileb. ix. 9. Col. ii. 17*. Some think, when he said, *destroy this temple*, he pointed to his own body, or laid his hand upon it; however, it is certain he *spake of the temple of his body*. Note, The body of Christ is the true temple, of which that of Jerusalem was a type. (1.) Like the temple, it was built by immediate divine direction, a body hast thou *prepared me*, *1 Chron. xxviii. 19*. (2.) Like the temple, it was a *holy house*, it is called *that holy thing*. (3.) It was, like the temple, the habitation of God's glory, there the eternal Word dwelt, the true Shechinah. He is Immanuel. God with us. (4.) The temple was the place and medium of intercourse between God and Israel: there God revealed himself to them, there they presented themselves and their services to him. Thus by Christ God speaks to us, and we speak to him. Worshipers looked towards that house, *1 Kings viii. 30-35*. So we must worship God with an eye to Christ.

5. A reflection which the disciples made upon this long after, inserted here to illustrate the story, *ver. 22. When he was risen from the dead, some years after, his disciples remembered that he had said this*. We found them, *ver. 17*. remembering what had been *written before of him*, and here remembering what they had *heard from him*. Note, The memories of Christ's disciples should be like the treasure of the good householder furnished with things both new and old, *Matt. xiii. 52*. Now observe,

1. When they remembered that saying; when he was risen from the dead. It seems they did not at this time fully understand Christ's meaning, for they were as yet but babes in knowledge, but they laid it up in their hearts, and afterwards it became both intelligible and useful. Note, It is good to *hear for the time to come*, *Isa. xlii. 23*. The juniors in years and profession should treasure up those truths, which at present they do not well understand either the meaning or use of, for they will be serviceable to them hereafter when they come to greater proficiency. It was said of the scholars of Pythagoras, that his precepts seemed to freeze in them till they were forty years old, and then they began to thaw; so this saying of Christ revived in the memories of his disciples, when he was risen from the dead! and why then? (1.) Because then the Spirit was poured out to bring things to their remembrance, which Christ had said to them, and to make them both *easy* and ready to them, *John xvi. 26*. That very day that Christ rose from the dead he *opened their understandings*, *Luke xxiv. 45*. (2.) Because then this saying of Christ was fulfilled, when the temple of his body had been *destroyed*, and was raised again, and that upon the *third day*, then they remembered this among other words Christ had said to this purpose. Note, It contributes much to the understanding of the scripture to observe the fulfilling of the scripture. The event will expound the prophecy.

2. What use they made of it. They believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had said, i. e. their belief of these was confirmed, and received fresh support and vigour. They were slow of heart to believe, *Luke xxiv. 25*. but they were *sure*. The scripture and the word of Christ are here put together, not because they concur and exactly agree together, but because they mutually illustrate and strengthen each other. When the disciples saw both what they had read in the Old Testament, and what they had heard from Christ's own mouth, fulfilled in his death and resurrection, they were the more confirmed in their belief of both.

23. ¶ Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. 24. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men. 25. And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

We have here an account of the success, the poor success of Christ's preaching and miracles at Jerusalem, while he kept the passover there. Observe,

1. That our Lord Jesus, when he was at Jerusalem at the passover, did preach and work miracles. People's believing on him, implied that he preached; and it is expressly said, they saw the miracles he did. He was now in Jerusalem, the holy city, whence the word of the Lord was to go forth; his residence was mostly in Galilee, and therefore when he was in

Jerusalem he was very busy. The time was holy time, the feast-day, time appointed for the service of God: at the passover the Levites taught the good knowledge of the Lord, *2 Chron. xxx. 22* and Christ took that opportunity of preaching, when the concourse of people was great, and thus he would own and honour the divine institution of the passover.

2. That hereby many were brought to believe in his name, to acknowledge him a teacher come from God, as Nicodemus did, *chap. iii. 2*. a great prophet, and probably some of those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem, believed him to be the Messiah promised, so ready were they to welcome the first appearance of that bright and morning star.

3. That yet Jesus did not commit himself unto them, *ver. 24. ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων αὐτῷ*. He did not trust himself with them. It is the same word that is used for believing in him. So that to believe in Christ, is to commit ourselves to him and to his conduct. Christ did not see cause to repose any confidence in these new converts at Jerusalem, where he had many enemies that sought to destroy him, either, (1.) Because they were false, at least some of them, and would betray him if they had an opportunity, or were strongly tempted to it. He had more disciples that he could trust among the Galileans, than among the dwellers at Jerusalem. In dangerous times and places, it is wisdom to take heed who you confide in, *ἐμπιστο ἀνθρώπων μάταιον ἐστὶν διδασκαλῆσαι*. Or, (2.) Because they were weak, and I would hope that this was the worst of it: not that they were treacherous, and designed him a mischief; but, (1.) They were timorous, and wanted zeal and courage, and might perhaps be frightened to do an ill thing. In times of difficulty and danger cowards are not fit to be trusted. Or, (2.) They were tumultuous, and wanted discretion and conduct. These in Jerusalem perhaps had their expectations more raised than others of the temporal reign of the Messiah, and in that expectation would be ready to give some bold strokes at the government, if Christ would have committed himself to them, and put himself at the head of them! but he would not, for his kingdom is not of this world. We should be shy of turbulent unquiet people, as our Master here was, though they profess to believe in Christ, as these did.

4. That the reason why he did not commit himself to them was, because he knew them, *ver. 25*. knew the wickedness of some, and the weakness of others. The evangelist takes this occasion to assert Christ's omniscience.

1. He knew all men, not only their names and faces, as it is possible for us to know many, but their nature, dispositions, affections, designs, so as we do not know any man, scarce ourselves. He knows all men, for his powerful hand made them all, his piercing eye sees them all, sees into them. He knows his subtle enemies, and all their secret projects; his false friends and their true characters; what they really are, whatever they pretend to be. He knows them that are truly his, knows their integrity, and knows their infirmity too. He knows their frame.

2. He needed not that any should testify of man. His knowledge was not by information from others, but by his own infallible intuition. It is the infelicity of earthly princes, that they must see with other men's eyes, and hear with other men's ears, and take things as they are represented to them; but Christ goes purely upon his own knowledge. Angels are his messengers, but not his spies, for his own eyes run to and fro through the earth, *2 Chron. xvi. 9*. This may comfort us in reference to Satan's accusations, that Christ will not take men's characters from him.

3. He knew what is in man; in particular persons, in the nature and race of man. We know what is done by men, Christ knows what is in them, tries the heart and the reins. This is the prerogative of that essential eternal Word, *Ileb. iv. 12, 13*. We invade his prerogative, if we presume to judge men's hearts. How fit is Christ to be the Saviour of men, very fit to be the physician, who hath such a perfect knowledge of the patient's state and case, temper and distemper; knows what is in him. How fit also to be the judge of all, for the judgment of him who knows all men, all in men must needs be according to truth.

Now this is all the success of Christ's preaching and miracles at Jerusalem, in this journey. The Lord comes to his temple, and none come to him, but a parcel of weak simple people, that he can neither have credit from, nor put confidence in; yet he shall at length see of the travail of his soul.

C H A P. III.

In this chapter we have, (1.) Christ's discourse with Nicodemus, a Pharisee, concerning the great mysteries of the gospel which he here privately lets him into, *ver. 1-21*. (2.) John Baptist's discourse with his disciples, concerning Christ, upon occasion of his coming into the neighbourhood where he was, *ver. 22-36*. in which he fairly and faithfully resigns all his honour and interest to him.

1. THERE was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2. The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. 3. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again: 8. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. 9. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? 10. Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? 11. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen: and ye receive not our witness. 12. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, If I tell you of heavenly things? 13. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that

that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven, 14. ¶ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world: but that the world through him might be saved. 18. ¶ He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. 20. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. 21. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

We found in the close of the foregoing chapter that few were brought to Christ at Jerusalem; yet here was *one*, a considerable one; it is worth while to go a great way for the salvation though but of *one soul*. Observe,

1. Who this Nicodemus was. Not many mighty and noble are called, yet some are, and here was one. *Not many of the rulers, or of the Pharisees*; yet, (1.) This was a *man of the Pharisees*, bred to learning, a scholar; let it not be said, that all Christ's followers are *unlearned and ignorant men*. The principles of the Pharisees, and the peculiarities of their sect were directly contrary to the spirit of Christianity, yet there were some in whom even those high thoughts were cast down and brought into obedience to Christ. The grace of Christ is able to subdue the greatest opposition. (2.) He was a *ruler of the Jews*, a member of the great Sanhedrim, a senator, a privy counsellor, a man of authority in Jerusalem. As bad as things were, there were some rulers *well inclined*, who yet could do little good, because the stream was so strong against them; they were over-ruled by the majority, and yoked with those that were corrupt, so that the good which they would do they could not do it; yet Nicodemus continued in his place, and did what he could, when he could not do what he would.

2. His solemn address to our Lord Jesus Christ, *ver. 2.* See here,

1. When he came. *He came to Jesus by night*. Observe, 1. He made a private and particular address to Christ, and did not think it enough to hear his public discourses. He resolved to talk with him by himself, where he might be free with him. Personal converse with skilful faithful ministers about the affairs of our souls would be of great use to us, *Mat. ii. 7.*

2. He made this address *by night*, which may be considered either, (1.) As an act of *prudence and discretion*. Christ was engaged all day in public work, and he would not interrupt him then, nor expect his attendance then, but observed *Christ's hour*, and waited on him when he was *at leisure*. Note, Private advantages to ourselves and our own families, must give way to those that are public and of more general use. The greater good must be preferred before the less. Christ had many enemies, and therefore Nicodemus came *incognito* to him, lest if the chief priests had known it, they should have been the more enraged against Christ. (2.) As an act of *zeal and forwardness*. Nicodemus was a man of business, and could not spare time all day to make Christ a visit, and therefore he would rather take time from the diversions of the *evening*, or the rest of the *night*, than not converse with Christ. When others were sleeping he was getting knowledge, as David by meditation, *Psal. lxxiii. 6.* and *exix. 148.* Probably it was the very next night after he saw Christ's miracles, and he would not let slip the first opportunity of pursuing his convictions. He knew not how soon Christ might leave the town, nor what might happen betwixt that and another feast, and therefore would lose no time. In the night his converse with Christ would be more free, and less liable to disturbance. These were *Noctes Christianae*, much more instructive than the *Noctes Atticae*. Or, (3.) As an act of *fear and cowardice*. He was afraid or ashamed to be seen with Christ, and therefore came *in the night*. When religion is out of *fashion*, there are many Nicodemites, especially among the rulers, who have a better affection to Christ and his religion than they would be known to have. But observe, (1.) Though he came by night Christ bid him welcome, accepted his integrity, and pardoned his infirmity: considered his temper, which perhaps was *timorous*, and the *temptation* he was in from his place and office; and hereby taught his ministers to become all things to all men, and to encourage good beginnings, though they are weak. *Paul preached privately to them of reputation, Gal. ii. 2.* (2.) Though now he came by night, yet afterwards when there was occasion, he owned Christ publicly. *John vii. 50.—xix. 39.* The grace which is at first but a grain of mustard-seed may grow to be a great tree.

2. What he said. He did not come to talk with Christ about politics and state-affairs, though he was a ruler, but about the concern of his own soul and its salvation, and without circumlocutions comes presently to the business; he calls Christ *Rabbi*, which signifies a *great man*; see *Isa. xix. 20.* *He shall send them a Saviour, and a great one; a Saviour and a Rabbi*, so the word is. There are hopes of those who have a respect for Christ, and think and speak honourably of him. He tells Christ how far he had attained; *we know that thou art a teacher*. Observe,

1. His assertion concerning Christ: *Thou art a teacher, come from God*; not educated or ordained by men, as other teachers, but supported with divine inspiration and divine authority. He that was to be the sovereign ruler came first to be a *teacher*, for he would rule with reason, not with rigour, by the power of truth, not of the sword. The world lay in ignorance and mistake; the Jewish teachers were corrupt and caused them to err; *it is time for the Lord to work*. He came a *teacher from God*, from God as the *Father of mercies*, in pity to a dark deceived world; from God as the *Father of Lights and Fountain of truth*; all that light and truth which we may venture our souls upon.

2. His assurance of it; *we know*, not only I, but others; so he took it for granted, the thing being so plain and self-evident. Perhaps he knew that there were divers of the Pharisees and rulers with whom he conversed, that were under the same convictions, but had not the grace to own it. Or, we may suppose he speaks in the plural number: *we know*, because he brought with him one or more of his friends and pupils, to receive instructions from Christ, knowing them to be of common concern. Master, said

he, we come with a desire to be taught to be thy scholars, for we are fully satisfied thou art a divine teacher.

3. The ground of this assurance; *no man can do these miracles that thou dost, except God be with him*. Here, 1. We are assured of the truth of Christ's miracles, and that they were not counterfeit. Here was Nicodemus, a judicious, sensible, inquisitive man, one that had all the *reason*, and *opportunity* imaginable to examine them, was so fully satisfied they were real miracles, that he was wrought upon by them to go contrary to his interest, and the stream of those of his own rank who were prejudiced against Christ.

2. We are directed what inference to draw from Christ's miracles; therefore we are to receive him as a *teacher come from God*: His miracles were his credentials. The course of nature could not be altered but by the power of the God of nature, who we are sure is the God of truth and goodness, and would never set his seal to a lie or a cheat.

3. The discourse between Christ and Nicodemus hereupon, or rather the sermon Christ preached to him: the contents of it, and that perhaps an abstract of Christ's public preaching; see *ver. 11, 12.*

Four things our Saviour here discoursed of.

First, Concerning the *necessity and nature of regeneration* and the *new birth*, *ver. 3—8.*

Now we must consider this, (1.) As *pertinently answered* to Nicodemus's address: *Jesus answered, ver. 3.* This answer was either, 1. A *rebuttal* of what he saw *defective* in the address of Nicodemus. It was not enough for him to admire Christ's miracles and acknowledge his mission, but he must be *born again*. It is plain he expected the *kingdom of heaven*, i. e. the kingdom of the Messiah, now shortly to appear; is belated aware of the dawning of that day: and according to the common notion of the Jews, he expects it to appear in external pomp and power, doubts not but this Jesus who works these miracles, is either the Messiah, or his prophet, and therefore makes his court to him, compliments him and so hopes so secure a share to himself of the advantage of that kingdom. But Christ tells him he can have no benefit by that *change of the state*, unless there be a *change of the spirit*, of the principles and dispositions, equivalent to a new birth. Nicodemus came *by night*, but this will not do, saith Christ. His religion must be owned before men: so Dr. Hammond. Or, 2. A *reply* to what he saw *designed* in his address. When Nicodemus owned Christ a *teacher come from God*, one intrusted with an extraordinary revelation from heaven, he plainly intimated a desire to know what it was, and a readiness to receive it, and Christ gives it him. (2.) We may consider this as *positively and vehemently asserted* by our Lord Jesus; *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, I the amen, the amen say it*, so it may read: I the faithful and true witness. The matter is settled irreversibly, that *except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God*: I say it to thee, though a Pharisee, though a master in Israel. Observe,

1. What it is that is required; to be *born again*; that is, (1.) We must *live a new life*. Birth is the beginning of life; to be *born again* is to begin anew, as those that have hitherto lived either much amiss or to little purpose. We must not think to patch up the old building, but begin from the foundation. (2.) We must have a *new nature*, new principles, new affections, new aims. We must be *born anew*, which signifies both *denovo* and *desuper*. (1.) We must be *born anew*, so the word is taken, *Gal. iv. 9.* and *ab initio*, *Luke i. 3.* By our *first birth* we were corrupt, shapen in sin and iniquity, we must therefore undergo a second birth; our souls must be *fashioned and enlightened anew*. (2.) We must be *born from above*, so the word is used by the evangelist, *chap. iii. 31.—xix. 11.* and take it to be especially intended here, not excluding the other; for to be *born from above* supposeth being *born again*. But this new birth has its rise from heaven, *chap. i. 13.* and its tendency to heaven: it is to be born to a *divine and heavenly* life, a life of communion with God and the upper world, and in order to this, it is to partake of a *divine nature*, and bear the *image of the heavenly*.

2. The indispensable necessity of this: *except a man* (any one that partakes of the human nature and consequently of the corruptions of that, except he) *be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God*; the kingdom of the Messiah begun in *grace* and perfected in *glory*. Except we be *born from above*, we cannot see this. That is, (1.) We cannot *understand* the nature of it. Such is the nature of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, (in which Nicodemus desired to be instructed) that the soul must be new modelled and moulded; the natural man must become a spiritual man, before he is capable of receiving and understanding them, *1 Cor. ii. 14.* (2.) We cannot *receive the comfort* of it; cannot expect any benefit by Christ and his gospel, nor have any part or lot in the matter. Note, Regeneration is absolutely necessary to our happiness here and hereafter. Considering what we are by nature, how corrupt and sinful; what *God* is, in whom alone we can be happy, and what *heaven* is, to which the perfection of our happiness is reserved, it will appear in the nature of the thing that we must be *born again*; because it is impossible we should be *happy*, if we be not *holy*, see *2 Cor. vi. 11, 12.*

This great truth of the necessity of regeneration being thus solemnly laid down,

1. It is objected against by Nicodemus, *ver. 4.* how can a man be born when he is old? old as I am, *ἡλικίας*, being an old man, Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Herein appears, 1. His weakness in knowledge; what Christ spoke spiritually, he seems to have understood after a corporeal and carnal manner; as if there were no other way of regenerating and new moulding an immortal soul, but by new framing the body, and bringing that back to the *rock out of which it was hewn*; as if there were such a connection between the soul and the body, that there could be no fashioning the *heart anew*, but by forming the *bones anew*. Nicodemus, as other the Jews, valued himself, no doubt, very much by his *first birth*, and the dignities and privileges of that; the *place* of it, the holy land, perhaps the holy city; his *parentage*, such as that which Paul could have gloried in, *Phil. iii. 5.* And therefore it is a great surprize to him to hear of being *born again*; could he be better bred and born, than bred and born an Israelite? Or by any other birth stand fairer for a room in the kingdom of the Messiah? Indeed they looked upon a proselyted Gentile to be as one *born again* or *born anew*, but could not imagine how a Jew, a Pharisee, could ever *better himself*, by being *born again*: he therefore thinks if he must be *born again*, it must be of *her* that bare him *first*. They that are proud of their *first birth*, are hardly brought to a *new birth*. 2. His willingness to be taught. He doth not turn his back upon Christ because of his hard saying, but ingenuously acknowledges his ignorance, which implies a desire to be better informed; and so I take this, rather than that he had such gross notions of the new birth Christ spoke of. Lord, make me to understand this, for it is a riddle to me; I am such a fool as to know no other way for a man to be born, but of his mother. When we meet with that in the things of God which is *dark and hard to be understood*, we must with humility and industry continue our attendance upon the means of knowledge till God shall reveal even that unto us.

2. It is opened and further explained by our Lord Jesus, *ver. 5, 6, 7, 8.* From the objection he takes occasion,

1. To repeat and confirm what he had said, *ver. 5. Verily, Verily, I say unto thee,* the very same that I said before. Note, The word of Christ is not yea and nay, but yea and amen; what he hath said he will abide by whosoever saith against it; nor will he retract any of his sayings for the ignorance and mistakes of men. Though Nicodemus understood not the mystery of regeneration, yet Christ asserts the necessity of it as positively as before. Note, It is folly to think of evading the obligation of evangelical precepts, by pleading that they are unintelligible, *Rom. iii. 3, 4.*

2. To expound and clear what he had said concerning regeneration; for the explication of which he further shews,

1. The author of this blessed change, and who it is that works it. To be born again is to be *born of the Spirit*, *ver. 5, 6—8.* It is not wrought by any wisdom or power of our own, but by the power and influence of the blessed Spirit of grace: It is the *sanctification of the Spirit*, *1 Pet. i. 2.* and *renewing of the Holy Ghost*, *Tit. iii. 5.* The word he works by is inspiration, and the heart to be wrought on he has access to.

2. The nature of his change: and what that is which is wrought; it is *spirit*, *ver. 6.* Those that are regenerated are made *spiritual*, and refined from the dross and dregs of sensuality. The dictates and interests of the rational and immortal soul have retrieved the dominion they ought to have over the flesh. The Pharisees placed their religion in external purity, and external performances; and it would be a mighty change indeed with them, no less than a new birth, to become *spiritual*.

3. The necessity of this change.

(1.) Christ here shews that it is necessary in the nature of the thing, for we are not fit to enter into the kingdom of God till we are born again; *ver. 6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh.* Here is our malady, and the causes of it, which are such as speak plain that there is no remedy but we must be *born again*.

1. We are here told *what we are*; we are *flesh*, not only corporeal but corrupt, *Gen. vi. 3.* The soul is still a spiritual substance, but so wedded to the flesh, so captivated by the will of the flesh, so employed in making provision for the flesh, that it is justly called *flesh*; it is carnal. And what communion can there be between God who is a *Spirit*, and a soul in this condition?

(2.) How we came to be so; by being *born of the flesh*: It is a corruption that is bred in the bone with us, and therefore we cannot have a new nature but we must be *born again*. The corrupt nature which is *flesh*, takes rise from our first birth, and therefore the new nature which is *Spirit*, must take rise from a second birth. Nicodemus spoke of entering again into his mother's womb and being born; but if he could do so, to what purpose? If he were born of his mother a hundred times, that would not mend the matter, for still that which is *born of the flesh is flesh*, a clean thing cannot be brought out of an unclean: He must seek for another original, must be born of the Spirit, or he cannot become spiritual. The case is in short this; man though made to consist of body and soul, yet his spiritual part had then so much the dominion over his corporeal part, that he was denominated a *living soul*, *Gen. ii. 7.* but by indulging the appetite of the flesh in eating forbidden fruit, he prostituted the just dominion of the soul to the tyranny of sensual lust, and became no longer a *living soul*, but *flesh*; *Dust thou art*: The living soul became dead and inactive; thus in the day he sinned he *surely died*, and so he became *earthly*. In this degenerate state he begat a son in his own likeness, he transmitted the human nature, which had been intirely deposited in his hands, thus corrupted and depraved, and in the same plight is still propagated. Corruption and sin are wove into our nature; we are *shapen in iniquity*, which makes it necessary that the nature be changed. It is not enough to put on a new coat, or a new face, but we must put on the *new man*, we must be *new creatures*.

(2.) Christ makes it further necessary by his own words, *ver. 7. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again.* (1.) Christ hath said it, and as he himself never did nor ever will unsay it, so all the world cannot gainsay it: that we *must be born again*. He who is the great Lawgiver, whose will is a law; he who is the great Mediator of the new covenant, and has full power to settle the terms of our reconciliation to God and happiness in him; he who is the great Physician of souls, knows their case, and what is necessary to their cure; he hath said *ye must be born again*. I said unto thee that which all are concerned in, *ye must, ye all*, one as well as another, *ye must be born again*: not only the common people, but the rulers, the *masters in Israel*. (2.) We are not to marvel at it; for when we consider the holiness of the God with whom we have to do, the great design of our redemption, the depravity of our nature, and the constitution of the happiness set before us, we shall not think it strange that so much stress is laid upon this as the one thing needful, that *we must be born again*.

4. This change is illustrated by two comparisons.

1. The regenerating work of the spirit is compared to *water*, *ver. 5.* To be born again is to be *born of water*, and of the Spirit, i. e. of the Spirit working like water, as *Matt. iii. 11.* with the Holy Ghost and with fire, means, with the Holy Ghost as with fire.

(1.) That which is primarily intended here, is to shew that the Spirit in sanctifying a soul, (1.) *Cleanseth* and purifieth it as water: takes away its filth by which it was unfit for the kingdom of God. It is the *washing of regeneration*, *Tit. iii. 5.* *ye are washed*, *1 Cor. vi. 11.* see *Ezek. xxxvi. 25.* (2.) Cools and refresheth it, as water doth the hunted hart and the weary traveller. The Spirit is compared to water, *Isa. xlv. 3.* *John vii. 38, 39.* In the first creation the fruits of heaven were *born of water*, *Gen. i. 20.* in allusion to which perhaps they that are born from above are born of water.

It is probable Christ had an eye to the ordinance of baptism, which John had used, and he himself had begun to use. You must be born again of the Spirit, which regeneration by the Spirit should be signified by washing with water, as the visible sign of that spiritual grace: not that all they, and they only, that are baptized are saved, but without that new birth which is wrought by the Spirit, and signified by baptism, none shall be looked upon as the *protected, privileged* subjects of the kingdom of heaven. The Jews cannot partake of the benefits of the Messiah's Kingdom they had so long looked for, unless they quit all expectations of being justified by the works of the law, and submit to the *baptism of repentance*, the great gospel duty, for the remission of sins, the great gospel privilege.

2. It is compared to *wind*, *ver. 8.* *The wind blows where it listeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit.* The same word (*πνευμα*) signifies both the wind and the spirit. The spirit came upon the apostles in a *rustling mighty wind*, *Acts ii. 2.* His strong influences on the hearts of sinners are compared to the *breathing of the wind*, *Ezek. xxxvii. 9.* and his sweet influences on the souls of saints, to the north and south wind, *Cant. iv. 16.* This comparison is here used to shew,

1. That the Spirit in regeneration works *arbitrarily*, and as a free agent. *The wind blows where it listeth* for us, and doth not attend our order, nor is subject to our command; God directs it, it fulfils his word, *Psalm cxlviii. 8.* The Spirit dispenseth his influences where and when; on whom, and

in what measure and degree he pleaseth; *dividing to every man severally as he will*, *1 Cor. xii. 11.*

2. That he works *powerfully*, and with evident effects; *Thou hearest the sound thereof*; though its causes are hidden, its effects are manifest. When the soul is brought to mourn for sin, to groan under the burden of corruption, to breathe after Christ, to cry *Abba, Father*, then we *hear the sound of the Spirit*; we find he is at work, as *Acts ix. 11.* *Behold, he prays.*

3. That he works *mysteriously*, and in secret hidden ways; *Thou canst not tell whence it comes, or whither it goes.* How it gathers, and how it spends its strength, is a riddle to us; so the manner and methods of the Spirit's working is a mystery: *Which way went the Spirit?* *1 Kings xii. 24.* See *Eccles. xi. 5.* and compare it with *Psalm cxxxix. 14.*

Secondly, Here is a discourse concerning the *certainly, and sublimity of gospel-truths*, which Christ takes occasion for from the weakness of Nicodemus.

Here is, 1. The objection which Nicodemus still made, *ver. 9. How can these things be?* Christ's explication of the doctrine of the necessity of regeneration, it should seem, made it never the clearer to him. The corruption of nature which make it necessary, and the way of the Spirit which makes it practicable, are as much mysteries to him as the thing itself: though he had in general owned Christ a divine teacher yet he was unwilling to receive his teachings, when they did not agree with the notions he had imbibed. Thus many profess to admit the doctrine of Christ in general, and yet will neither believe the truths of Christianity, nor submit to the laws of it further than they please: Christ shall be their teacher, provided they may choose their lesson. Now here,

(1.) Nicodemus owns himself ignorant of Christ's meaning after all; *How can these things be?* They are things I do not understand, my capacity will not reach them: *Thus the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to the natural man.* He is not only estranged from them, and therefore they are dark to him, but prejudiced against them, and therefore they are foolishness to him.

(2.) Because this doctrine was *unintelligible to him* (so he was pleased to make it) he questions the truth of it; as if because it was a *paradox* to him, it was a *chimera* in itself. Many have such an opinion of their own capacity, as to think that cannot be proved, which they cannot believe; by wisdom they knew not Christ.

2. The reproof which Christ gave him for his dullness and ignorance; *Art thou a master in Israel?* *Διδάσκαλος*, a teacher, a tutor, one who sits in Moses' chair, and yet not only unacquainted with the doctrine of regeneration, but incapable of understanding it. The word is a reproof, (1.) To those that undertake to teach others, and yet are ignorant and unskilful in the word of righteousness themselves. (2.) To those that spend their time in learning and teaching notions and ceremonies in religion, niceties and criticisms in scripture, and neglect that which is practical, and tends to reform the heart and life. Two words in the reproof are very emphatical, (1.) The place where his lot was cast; in Israel where there was such great plenty of the means of knowledge, where divine revelation was. He might have learned this out of the Old Testament. (2.) The things he was thus ignorant in; *these things*, these necessary things, these great things, these divine things; but he never read *Psalm i. 5—10.* *Ezek. xviii. 13.*—*xxxvi. 25, 26.*

3. Christ's discourse hereupon, of the certainty and sublimity of gospel truths, *ver. 11, 12, 13.* To shew the folly of those who make strange of these things, and recommend them to our search. Observe here,

1. That the truths Christ taught were very certain, and what we may venture upon, *ver. 11. We speak what we do know*; we, whom doth he mean besides himself? Some understand it of those that bore witness to him and with him on earth; the prophets and John Baptist, they spoke what they knew and had seen, and were themselves abundantly satisfied in; divine revelation carries its own proof along with it. Others, of those that bore witness from heaven, the Father and the Holy Ghost; the Father was with him, the Spirit of the Lord was upon him; therefore he speaks in the plural number, as *John xiv. 13.* *We will come unto him.* Observe, (1.) That the truths of Christ are of undoubted certainty. We have all the reason in the world to be assured, that the sayings of Christ are *faithful sayings*, and such as we may venture our souls upon; for he is not only a *credible witness*, who would not go about to deceive us, but a *competent witness*, who would not himself be deceived; *We testify that we have seen.* He spoke not upon hearsay, but upon the clearest evidence, and therefore with the greatest assurance. What he spoke of God, of the invisible world, of heaven and hell, of the divine will concerning us, and the counsels of peace, was that he knew and had seen, for he was *by him as one brought up with him*, *Prov. viii. 30.* Whatever Christ spoke he spoke of his own knowledge. (2.) That the unbelief of sinners is greatly aggravated by the infallible certainty of the truths of Christ. The things are thus sure, thus clear, and yet ye receive not our witness. Multitudes to be *unbelievers* of that which yet (so cogent are the motives of credibility) they cannot *disbelieve*.

2. The truths Christ taught, though communicated in language and expressions borrowed from common and earthly things, yet in their own nature were most sublime and heavenly; this is intimated, *ver. 12. If I have told them earthly things*, i. e. have told them the great things of God in similitudes taken from earthly things, to make them the more easy and intelligible, as that of the *new birth* and the *wind*. If I have thus accommodated myself to your capacities, and lisped to you in your own language, and cannot make you to understand my doctrine, what would you do if I should accommodate myself to the nature of the things, and speak with the tongue of angels, that language which mortals cannot utter? if such *familiar expressions* be stumbling-blocks, what would *abstract ideas* be, and spiritual things painted proper? Now we may learn hence, (1.) To admire the height and depth of the doctrine of Christ; it is a great mystery of godliness. The things of the gospel are *heavenly things*, out of the road of the enquiries of human reason, and much more out of the reach of its discoveries. (2.) To acknowledge with thankfulness the condescension of Christ, that he is pleased to suit the manner of the gospel revelation to our capacities; to *speak to us as to children*. He considers our *frame*, that we are of the earth, and our *place*, that we are on the earth, and therefore speaks to us earthly things, and makes things sensible the vehicle of things spiritual, to make them the more easy and familiar to us: Thus he has done both in parables and in sacraments. (3.) To lament the corruption of our nature, and our great unaptness to receive and entertain the truths of Christ. Earthly things are despised because they are *vulgar*, and heavenly things because they are *abstruse*; and so whatever method is taken, still some fault or other is found with it, *Matt. xi. 17.* but wisdom is and will be justified of her children notwithstanding.

3. Our Lord Jesus, and none but he, was fit to reveal to us a doctrine thus certain, thus sublime, *ver. 13. No man hath ascended up into heaven, but he—*

1. None but he was able to reveal to us the will of God for our salvation. Nicodemus addressed to Christ as a prophet, but we must know that he is greater than all the Old Testament prophets, for none of them had

had ascended into heaven. They wrote by divine inspiration, but not of their own knowledge; see *John* i. 18. Moses ascended into the mount, but not into heaven: No man hath attained to the certain knowledge of God and heavenly things so as Christ has: see *Matt.* xi. 27. It is not for us to send to heaven for instructions, we must wait to receive what instructions heaven will send to us; see *Prov.* xxx. 4. *Deut.* xxx. 12.

2. Jesus Christ is able and fit and every way qualified to reveal the will of God to us; for it is *he that came down from heaven and is in heaven*. He had said, *ver.* 12. *How shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?* Now here, (1.) He gives them an instance of those *heavenly things*, which he could tell them of, when he tells them of one that *came down from heaven*; and yet is the *Son of man*; is the *Son of man*, and yet is *in heaven*. If the regeneration of the *soul of man* was such a mystery, what then is the incarnation of the *Son of God*? These are divine and heavenly things indeed. We have here an intimation of Christ's two distinct natures in one person; his divine nature, in that he *came down from heaven*; his human nature, in that he is the *Son of man*, and that union of those two in that, while he is the *Son of man*, yet he is *in heaven*. (2.) He gives them a proof of his ability to speak to them *heavenly things*, and to lead them into the arcana of the kingdom of heaven, by telling them,

1. That he *came down from heaven*. The intercourse settled between God and men began *above*; the first motion towards it did not arise from this earth, but *came down from heaven*. We love him and send to him, because he first loved us and sent to us. Now this speaks, (1.) Christ's divine nature. He that came down from heaven is certainly more than a mere man; he is the *Lord from heaven*, *1 Cor.* xv. 47. (2.) His intimate acquaintance with the divine counsels; for coming from the court of heaven he had been from eternity conversant with them. (3.) It speaks *God manifest*. Under the Old Testament God's favours to his people are expressed by his *hearing from heaven*, *2 Chron.* vii. 14. *looking from heaven*, *Psalms* lxxx. 14. *speaking from heaven*, *Neh.* ix. 13. sending from heaven, *Psalms* lvii. 3. But the New Testament shews us God *coming down from heaven* to teach and save us. That he thus *descended* is an admirable mystery, for the Godhead cannot change places, nor did he bring his body from heaven: but that he thus *descended* for our redemption in a more admirable *mercy*; herein he commended his love.

2. That he is the *Son of man*, that Son of man spoken of by David, *chap.* vii. 13. by which the Jews always understand to be meant the Messiah. Christ by calling himself the *Son of man*, shews that he is the *second Adam*, for the first Adam was the *father of man*. And of all the Old Testament titles of the Messiah, he chose to make use of *this*, because it was most expressive of his *humility*, and most agreeable to his present state of *humiliation*.

3. That he is *in heaven*. Now at this time when he is talking with Nicodemus on earth, yet as God, he is *in heaven*; the *Son of man*, as such, was not in heaven till his ascension: but he that was the Son of man by his divine nature, was now every where present, and particularly in heaven. Thus the Lord of glory, as such, could not be crucified, nor God, as such, shed his blood, yet that person who was the Lord of Glory was crucified, *1 Cor.* ii. 8. and God purchased the church with his *own blood*, *Acts* xx. 28. So close is the union of the two natures in one person, that there is a communication of properties. He doth not say *is in*, but *is in* *heaven*, GOD is the *in*, he that is, and heaven is the habitation of his holiness.

Thirdly, Christ here discourseth of the *great design of his own coming into the world, and the happiness of those that believe in him*, *ver.* 14—18. Here we have the very marrow and quintessence of the whole gospel; that faithful saying, *1 Tim.* i. 15. that Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the children of men from death and recover them to life. Now sinners are *dead men* upon a twofold account. (1.) As one that is mortally wounded or sick of an incurable disease, is said to be a *dead man*, for he is dying; and so Christ came to save us, by *healing us*, as the brasen serpent healed the Israelites, *ver.* 14, 15. (2.) As one that is justly condemned to die for an unpardonable crime, is a *dead man*, he is *dead in law*; and in reference to this part of our danger, Christ came to save us as a prince or judge, publishing an act of indemnity or general pardon under certain provisos; this saying here is opposed to condemning, *ver.* 16, 17, 18.

1. Jesus Christ came to save us by *healing us*, as the children of Israel that were stung with fiery serpents were cured and *lived* by looking up to the brasen serpent; we have the story of it, *Numb.* xxi. 6, 7, 8, 9. It was the last miracle that passed through the hand of Moses before his death.

Now in this type of Christ we may observe,

1. The *deadly and destructive nature of sin* that is implied here. The guilt of sin is like the *pain* of the biting of a fiery serpent; the power of corruption is like the *venom* diffused thereby. The devil is the old serpent, subtil at first, *Gen.* iii. 1. but ever since *fiery*, and his temptations *fiery darts*; his assaults terrifying, his victories destroying. Ask awakened consciences, ask damned sinners, and they will tell you, how charming soever the allurements of sin are, *at the last it bites like a serpent*, *Prov.* xxiii. 30, 31. God's wrath against us for sin is as those fiery serpents which God sent among the people to punish them for their murmurings. The curses of the law are as fiery serpents, so are all the tokens of divine wrath.

2. The powerful remedy provided against this fatal malady. The case of poor sinners is deplorable, but is it desperate? thanks be to God it is not; there is balm in Gilead. The *Son of man is lifted up*, as the *serpent of brass* was by Moses, which cured the stung Israelites. (1.) It was a *serpent of brass* that cured them. Brass is *bright*; we read of Christ's feet *shining like brass*, *Rev.* i. 15. It is *durable*, Christ is the same; it was made in the shape of a *fiery serpent*, and yet had no poison, no sting; fitly representing Christ, who was *made sin for us*, and yet knew no sin; was *made in the likeness of sinful flesh*, and yet not sinful: as harmless as a serpent of brass. The serpent was a cursed creature, Christ was made a *curse*. That which cured them minded them of their plague; so in Christ sin is set before us most fiery and formidable. (2.) It was lifted up upon a pole, and so must the Son of man be lifted up; thus it *behooved him*, *Luke* xxiv. 26—46. No remedy now. Christ is lifted up, 1. In his *crucifixion*; he was lifted up upon the cross: His death is called his being *lift up*, *John* xii. 32, 33. he was lifted up as a spectacle, as a mark; lifted up between heaven and earth, as if he had been unworthy of either and abandoned by both. 2. In his *exaltation*; he was lifted up to the Father's right hand to give repentance and remission; he was lifted up to the cross, to be further lifted up to the crown. 3. In the *publishing and preaching* of his everlasting gospel, *Rev.* xiv. 6. The serpent was lifted up, that all the thousands of Israel might see it; Christ in the gospel is exhibited to us, evidently set forth; Christ is *lifted up* as an ensign, *Isa.* xi. 10. (3.) It was lifted by Moses; Christ was made under the law of Moses, and Moses testified of him. (4.) Being thus lifted up, it was appointed for the cure of those that were bitten by fiery serpents; he that sent the plague provided the remedy: none could redeem and save us but he whose justice had condemned us: It was God that *found the ransom*, and the efficacy of it depends upon his appointment. The *fiery serpents* were sent to punish them for their *tempting Christ*, so the apostle saith, *1 Cor.* x. 9. and yet they were healed by virtue derived from him. He whom we have offended is *our peace*.

3. The way of *applying* this remedy, and that is by *believing*; which plainly alludes to the Israelites *looking up* to the brasen serpent in order to their being healed by it. If any stung Israelite was either so little sensible of his pain and peril, or had so little confidence in the word of Moses, as not to look up to the brasen serpent, justly did he die of his wound; but every one that *looked up to it* did well, *Numb.* xxi. 9. If any so far slight either their disease by sin, or the method of cure by Christ, as not to embrace Christ upon his own terms, their blood is upon their own head; He hath said, *Look and be saved*, *Isa.* xlv. 22. Look and live. We must take a complacency in and give consent to the methods which infinite wisdom has taken of saving a guilty world, by the mediation of Jesus Christ, as the great sacrifice and intercessor.

4. The great encouragements given us by faith to look up to him. (1.) It was for this end that he was *lifted up*, that his followers might be saved; and he will pursue his end. (2.) The offer that is made of salvation by him is general, that *whosoever believes* in him, without exception, might have benefit by him. (3.) The salvation offered is complete. (1.) They *shall not perish*, shall not die of their wounds, though they may be pained and ill frightened, iniquity shall not be their ruin. But that is not all. (2.) They *shall have eternal life*. They shall not only not die of their wounds in the wilderness but they shall reach Canaan (which they were then just ready to enter into) they shall enjoy the promised rest.

2. Jesus Christ came to save us by *pardon*ing us, that we might not die by the sentence of the law, *ver.* 16, 17. Here is *gospel* indeed; *good news*, the best that ever came from heaven to earth: Here is *much*, here is *all* in a little; the word of reconciliation in miniature.

1. Here is God's love in giving his Son for the world, *ver.* 16. where we have three things:

1. The great gospel mystery revealed: *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son*. The love of God the Father is the original of our regeneration by the Spirit; and our reconciliation by the lifting up of the Son. Note, 1. Jesus Christ is the *only begotten Son of God*. This magnifies his love in giving him for us, in giving him to us; now know we that he loves us, when he has given his *only begotten Son for us*, which speaks not only his dignity in himself, but his dearness to his Father: he was *always his delight*. 2. In order to the redemption and salvation of man, it pleased God to *give his only begotten Son*. He not only gave him, i. e. sent him into the world with full and ample power to negotiate a peace between heaven and earth, but he *gave him*, i. e. he gave him up to suffer and die for us, as the great propitiation or expiatory sacrifice. It comes in here as a reason why he *must be lifted up*, for so it was determined and designed by the Father, who gave him for this purpose, and *prepared him a body* in order to it. His enemies could not have *taken him*, if his Father had not given him. Though he was not yet crucified, yet in the determined counsel of God, he was *given up*, *Acts* ii. 23. Nay, further: God hath *given him*, that is, he hath made an offer of him to all, and given him to all true believers, to all the intents and purposes of the new covenant. He has given him to be our *prophet*, a *witness to the people*; the high priest of our profession; to be our peace; to be head of the church, and head over all things to the church; to be to us all we need. 3. Herein God has commended his *love to the world*. God so loved the world; so really, so richly. Now his creatures shall see that he loves them and wishes them well. So loved the world of fallen man, as he did not love that of fallen angels, see *Rom.* v. 8. *1 John* iv. 10. Behold and wonder that a *great God* should have such a *worthless world*! That the *holy God* should love such a *wicked world* with a love of good will, when he could not look upon it with any complacency! This was a *time of love indeed*, *Ezek.* xvi. 6—8. The Jews vainly conceited that the Messiah should be sent only in love to their nation, and to advance that upon the ruins of their neighbours; but Christ tells them he came in love to the *whole world*, Gentiles as well as Jews, *1 John* ii. 2. Though many of the world of mankind perish, yet God's giving his only begotten Son was an instance of his love to the whole world, because through him there is a *general offer* of life and salvation made to all. It is love to the revolted rebellious province, to issue out a proclamation of pardon and indemnity to all that will come in, plead it upon their knees, and return to their allegiance. So far God loved the apostate lapsed world, that he sent his Son with this fair proposal, that *whosoever believes in him*, one or other *shall not perish*. Salvation has been of the Jews, but now Christ is *known*, *salvation to the ends of the earth*, a common salvation.

2. Here is the great gospel duty, and that is to *believe in Jesus Christ*, whom God hath thus given, given for us, given to us, to accept the gift and answer the intention of the giver. We must yield an unfeigned assent and consent to the record God hath given in his word concerning his Son, God having given him to us to be our prophet, priest, and king, we must give up ourselves to be ruled and taught and saved by him.

3. Here is the great gospel benefit, That *whosoever believes in Christ shall not perish*. This he had said before, and here repeats it. It is the unspeakable happiness of all true believers, which they are eternally indebted to Christ for, (1.) That they are saved from the miseries of hell, delivered from *going down to the pit*, they *shall not perish*: God has taken away their sin, they shall not die; a pardon is purchased and so the attainder is reversed. (2.) They are intitled to the joys of heaven; They *shall have everlasting life*. The convicted traitor is not only pardoned but preferred, and made a favourite, and treated as one whom the King of kings *delights to honour*. Out of prison he cometh to reign, *Eccles.* iv. 14. If believers then children; and if children then heirs.

2. Here is God's design in sending his Son into the world: it was *that the world through him might be saved*. He came into the world with salvation in his eye, with salvation in his hand. Therefore the aforementioned offer of life and salvation is sincere, and shall be made good to all that by faith accept it. *Ver.* 47. *God sent his son into the world*, this guilty, rebellious apostate world; sent him as his agent or ambassador, not as sometimes he had sent angels in the world, as visitants, but as resident. Ever since man sinned he has dreaded the approach and appearance of any special messenger from heaven, as being conscious of guilt and looking for judgment; *we shall surely die, for we have sinned God*. If therefore the Son of God himself come, we are concerned to enquire on what errand he comes? Is it peace? Or, as they asked Samuel trembling, *Comest thou peaceably*; And this scripture returns the answer, *peaceably*.

1. He did not come to *condemn the world*. We had reason enough to expect he should, for it is a guilty world; he is *convicted*, and what cause can be shewn why judgment should not be given and execution awarded according to law? That *one blood* of which all nations of men are made, *Acts* xvii. 26. is not only tainted with an hereditary disease like Gehazi's leprosy, but it is tainted with an hereditary guilt, like that of the Amalekites, with whom God had war from generation to generation; and justly may such a world as this be *condemned*; and if God would have sent to condemn it, he had angels at command to pour out the vials of his wrath; a cherubim with a flaming sword ready to do execution, *If the Lord had been pleased to kill us*, he would not have sent his son among us. He came with full powers indeed to *execute judgment*, *John* v. 22, 27. but did not begin

begin with a judgment of condemnation, did not proceed upon the outlawry, nor take advantage against us for the breach of the covenant of innocence, but puts us upon a new trial before a throne of grace.

2. He came that the world through him might be saved; that a door of salvation might be opened to the world, and whoever would might enter in by it. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and so saving it. An act of indemnity is passed and published, through Christ a remedial law made; and the world of mankind dealt with not according to the rigours of the first covenant, but according to the riches of the second. That the world through him might be saved, for it could never be saved but through him; there is not salvation in any other. This is good news to a convinced conscience, healing to broken bones and bleeding wounds, that Christ our judge came not to condemn but to save.

3. From all this is inferred the happiness of true believers, ver. 18. *He that believeth on him is not condemned.* Though he have been a sinner, a great sinner, and stands convicted (*habes confidentem reum*) yet upon his believing, process is stayed, judgment is arrested, and he is not condemned. This speaks more than a reprieve; he is not condemned, that is, he is acquitted; he stands upon his deliverance (as we say) and if he be not condemned he is discharged; *expiatus*, he is not judged, nor dealt with in strict justice, according to the desert of his sins. He is accused, and he cannot plead not guilty to the indictment, but he can plead in bar, can plead a *noli prosequi* upon the indictment, as blessed Paul doth, *Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died.* He is afflicted, chastened of God, persecuted by the world, but he is not condemned. The cross perhaps lies heavy upon him, but he is saved from the curse. Condemned by the world, it may be, but not condemned with the world, Rom. viii. 1. 1 Cor. xi. 32.

Fourthly, Christ in the close discourseth concerning the deplorable condition of those that persist in unbelief and wilful ignorance, ver. 18—21.

(1.) Read here the doom of those that will not believe in Christ; they are condemned already. Observe, (1.) How great the sin of unbelievers is: it is aggravated from the dignity of the person they slight; they believe not in the name of the only begotten Son of God, who is infinitely true, and deserves to be believed; infinitely good, and deserves to be embraced. God sent one to save us that was dearest to himself, and shall not he be dearest to us? Shall we not believe on his name, who has a name above every name? (2.) How great the misery of unbelievers is; they are condemned already; which speaks, (1.) A certain condemnation. They are as sure to be condemned in the judgment of the great day, as if they were condemned already. (2.) A present condemnation. The curse has already taken hold of them, the wrath of God now fastens upon them: They are condemned already, for their own hearts condemn them. (3.) A condemnation grounded upon their former guilt: He is condemned already, for he lies open to the law for all his sins; the obligation of the law is in full force, power and virtue against him, because he is not by faith interested in the gospel defeasance; he is condemned already, because he has not believed. Unbelief may truly be called the great damning sin, because it leaves us under the guilt of all other sins; it is a sin against the remedy against our appeal.

2. Read also the doom of those that would not so much as know him, ver. 19. Many inquisitive people had knowledge of Christ and his doctrine and miracles, but they were prejudiced against him: and would not believe in him, while the generality were sottishly careless and stupid, and would not know him. And this is the condemnation, the sin that ruined them, that light is come into the world, and they loved darkness rather. Now here observe, (1.) That the gospel is light, and when the gospel came, light came into the world. Light is self-evidencing, so is the gospel, it proves its own divine original. Light is discovering, and truly the light is sweet, and rejoiceth the heart. It is a light shining in a dark place, and a dark place indeed the world would be without it. It is come into all the world, Col. i. 6. and not confined to one corner of it, as the Old Testament light was. (2.) It is the unspeakable folly of the most of men, that they loved darkness rather than light, rather than this light. The Jews loved the dark shadows of their law, and the instructions of their blind guides, rather than the doctrine of Christ. The Gentiles loved the superstitious services of an unknown God, whom they ignorantly worshipped, rather than the reasonable service which the gospel enjoins. Sinners that were wedded to their lusts, loved their ignorance and mistakes which supported them in their sins, rather than the truths of Christ that would have parted them from their sins. Man's apostacy began in an affectation of forbidden knowledge, but is kept up by an affectation of forbidden ignorance. Wretched man is in love with his sickness, in love with his slavery, and will not be made free, will not be made whole. (3.) The true reason why men love darkness rather than light, is because their deeds are evil. They love darkness, because they think it is an excuse for their evil deeds, and they hate the light because it robs them of the good opinion they had of themselves, by shewing them their sinfulness and misery. Their case is sad, and because they are resolved, they will not mend it, they are resolved they will not see it. (4.) Wilful ignorance is so far from excusing sin, that it will be found at the great day to aggravate the condemnation. This is the condemnation, this is it that ruins souls, that they shut their eyes against the light, and will not so much as admit a parley with Christ and his gospel; they set God so much at defiance, that they desire not the knowledge of his ways, Job xxi. 14. We must account in the judgment, not only for the knowledge we had and used not, but for the knowledge we might have had, and would not; not only for the knowledge we sinned against, but for the knowledge we sinned away.

For the further illustration of this he shews, ver. 20, 21. that according as men's hearts and lives are good or bad, accordingly they stand affected to the light Christ has brought into the world.

1. It is not strange, if those that do evil and resolve to persist in it, hate the light of Christ's gospel, for it is a common observation, that every one that doth evil hateth the light, ver. 20. Evil-doers seek concealment out of sense and shame, and fear of punishment, see Job xxiv. 13, &c. Sinful works are works of darkness, sin from the first affected concealment, Job xxxi. 33. The light shakes the wicked, Job xxxviii. 12, 13. Thus the gospel is a terror to the wicked world; they come not to this light, but keep as far off it as they can, lest their deeds should be reprov'd. Note, 1. The light of the gospel is sent into the world, to reprove the evil deeds of sinners; to make them manifest, Eph. v. 13. to shew people their transgressions, to shew that to be sin, which was not thought to be so; and to shew them the evil of their transgressions, that sin by the new commandment might appear exceeding sinful. The gospel has its convictions to make way for its consolations. 2. It is for this reason that evil doers hate the light of the gospel. There were those that had done evil, and were sorry for it, who bade this light welcome, as the publicans and harlots. But he that doth evil, that doth it and resolves to go on in it, hates the light; cannot bear to be told of his faults. All that opposition which the gospel of Christ has met with in the world, comes from the wicked heart, influenced by the wicked one. Christ is hated because sin is loved. 3. They who do not come to the light thereby evidence a secret hatred of the light. If they had not an antipathy to saving knowledge, they would not sit down so contentedly in damning ignorance.

2. On the other hand, upright hearts that approve themselves to God in their integrity, bids this light welcome, ver. 20. *He that doth truth comes to the light.* It seems then, though the gospel had many enemies, it had some friends. It is a common observation, that truths seek no corners. They who mean and act honestly, dread not a scrutiny: but desire it rather; now this is applicable to the gospel light: as it convinceth and terrifies evil-doers, so it confirms and comforts those that walk in their integrity. Observe here,

1. The character of a good man. (1.) He is one that doth truth; i. e. he acts truly and sincerely in all he doth. Though sometimes he comes short of doing good, the good he would do, yet he doth truth; he aims honestly, he has his infirmities, but holds fast his integrity; as Caius, that did faithfully, 3 John 5. as Paul, 2 Cor. i. 12. as Nathanael, John i. 47. as Asa, 1 Kings xv. 14. (2.) He is one that cometh to the light. He is ready to receive and entertain divine revelation, as far as it appears to him to be so, what uneasiness soever it may create him. He that doth truth, is willing to know the truth by himself, and to have his deeds made manifest. A good man is much in trying himself, and desirous that God would try him; Psal. xxvi. 2. He is solicitous to know what the will of God is, and resolves to do it; though never so contrary to his own will and interest.

2. Here is the character of a good work; it is wrought in God, in union with him by a covenanting faith, and in communion with him by devout affections. Our works are then good, and will bear the test when the will of God is the rule of them, and the glory of God the end of them; when they are done in his strength, and for his sake, to him and not to men; and if by the light of the gospel it be manifest to us that our works are thus wrought, then shall we have rejoicing, Gal. vi. 4. 2 Cor. 12.

Thus far we have Christ's discourse with Nicodemus; it is likely much more passed between them, and it had a good effect, for we find, John xix. 39. that Nicodemus, though he was puzzled at first, yet afterwards became a faithful disciple of Christ.

22. ¶ After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. 23. And John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came and were baptized. 24. For John was not yet cast into prison. 25. ¶ Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews, about purifying. 26. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him. 27. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. 28. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. 29. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. 30. He must increase, but I must decrease. 31. He that cometh from above, is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. 32. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth, and no man receiveth his testimony. 33. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. 34. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. 35. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. 36. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

In these verses we have,

1. Christ's removal into the land of Judea, ver. 22. and there he tarried with his disciples. Observe,

(1.) Our Lord Jesus after he entered upon his public work, travelled much and removed often, as the patriarchs in their sojournings. As it was a good part of his humiliation, that he had no certain dwelling-place, but was as Paul, in journeyings often, so it was an instance of his unwearied industry in the work for which he came into the world, that he went about in prosecution of it; many a weary step he took to do good to souls. The sun of righteousness took a large circuit to diffuse his light and heat. Psal. xix. 6.

(2.) He was not wont to stay long at Jerusalem; though he went frequently thither, yet he soon returned into the country; as here, After these things, after he had had this discourse with Nicodemus, he came into the land of Judea; not so much for greater privacy, though mean and obscure places best suited the humble Jesus in his humble state, but for greater usefulness; his preaching and miracles perhaps made most noise at Jerusalem, the fountain-head of news, but did least good there, where the topping men of the Jewish church had so much the ascendant.

(3.) When he came into the land of Judea his disciples came with him; for these were they that continued with him in his temptations. Many that flocked to him at Jerusalem would not follow his motions into the country, they had no business there; but his disciples attended him. If the ark remove, it is better remove and go after it (as they did, Josh. iii. 3.) than sit still without it, though it be in Jerusalem itself.

(4.) There he tarried with them, &c. He conversed with them, discoursed with them. He did not retire into the country for his ease and pleasure, but for more free conversation with his disciples and followers. See Cant. vii. 11, 12. Note, Those that are ready to go with Christ, shall find him as ready to stay with them. It is supposed he now staid five or six months in this country.

(5.) There he baptized; he admitted disciples, such as believed in him, and had more honesty and courage than those had at Jerusalem, chap. ii. 24. John began to baptize in the land of Judea, Matth. iii. 1. therefore Christ began there, for John had said, There comes one after me. He baptized not himself, with his own hand, but his disciples by his order and directions, as appears, chap. 4. But his disciples baptizing was his baptizing. Holy ordinances are Christ's, though administered by weak men.

2. John's continuance in his work as long as his opportunities lasted, *ver.* 23, 24. Here we are told,

1. That *John was baptizing*. Christ's baptism was for substance the same with John's, for he bore witness to Christ, and therefore they did not at all clash or interfere with one another. (1.) Christ began to preach and baptize before *John laid it down*, that he might be ready to receive John's disciples when he should be taken off; and so the wheels might be kept going. It is a comfort to useful men, when they are going off the stage, to see those rising up who are likely to fill up their room. (2.) John continued to preach and baptize, though Christ had *taken it up*; for he would still, according to the *measure given to him*, advance the interests of God's kingdom. There was still work for John to do, for Christ was not yet *generally known*, nor the minds of the people *thoroughly prepared* for him by repentance. From heaven John had received his *command*, and he would go on in his work, till from thence he received his *countermand*, and would have his *dismissal* from the same hand that gave him his *commission*. He doth not come in to Christ, lest what had formerly passed should look like a combination between them; but he *goes on* with his work, till providence lays him aside. The greater gifts of some do not *render* the labours of others that come short of them *needless* and *useless*; there is work enough for all hands. They are sullen that will sit down and do nothing, when they see themselves outshone. Though we have but one talent, we must account for that; and when we see ourselves *going off*, yet must *go on* to the last.

2. That he baptized in Enon near Salim, places we find nowhere else mentioned; and therefore the learned are altogether at a loss where to find them; wherever it was, it seems, John removed from place to place; he did not think there was any virtue in Jordan, because Jesus was baptized there, which should engage him to stay there, but as he saw cause, removed to other waters. Ministers must follow their opportunities; and he chose a place where there was much water; *ὕδατος πολλῶν, many waters*, i. e. many streams of water; so that wherever he met with any that were willing to submit to his baptism, water was at hand to baptize them with; *shallow* perhaps, as is usual where there are many brooks, but such as would serve his purpose. And in that country plenty of water was a valuable thing.

3. That thither people *came to him*, and *were baptized*. Though they did not come in such vast crowds as they did when he first appeared, yet now he was not without encouragement, but there were still those that attended and owned him. Some refer this book to John and to Jesus; *They came and were baptized*, i. e. some came to John and were baptized by him, some to Jesus and were baptized by him, and as their baptism was one, so were their hearts.

4. It is noted, *ver.* 4. that *John was not yet cast into prison*, to clear the order of the story, and to shew that these passages related here, *chap.* ii. and iii. in the harmony, are to come in before *Matth.* iv. 12. John never desisted from his work as long as he had his liberty; nay, he seems to have been the more industrious, because he foresaw his time was short; he was *not yet cast into prison*, but he expected it ere long, *John ix.* 4.

5. A contest between *John's disciples and the Jews, about purifying*, *ver.* 25. See how the gospel of Christ came not to *send peace upon earth*, but *division*. Observe,

1. Who were the disputants; *some of John's disciples, and the Jews* who had not submitted to his baptism of repentance. Penitents and impenitents divide this sinful world. In this contest, it should seem, John's disciples were the *aggressors*, and gave the *challenge*, and it is a sign they were novices that had more zeal than discretion. The truths of God have often suffered by the rashness of some, that have undertaken to defend them before they were able to do it.

2. What was the matter in dispute, about *purifying* about *religious washing*. (1.) We may suppose that John's disciples cried up his baptism, his *purifying*, as *instar omnium*, and gave the preference to that as perfecting and superseding all the purifications of the Jews; and they were in the right; but *young converts* are too apt to boast of their attainments, whereas, he that has found the *treasure* should *hide it* till he is sure he has it, and not talk of it too much at first. (2.) No doubt but the Jews, with as much assurance, applauded the *purifyings* that were in use among them, both those that were instituted by the law of Moses, and those that were imposed by the tradition of the elders; for the former they had a divine warrant, and for the latter the usage of the church. Now it is very likely that the Jews in this dispute, when they could not *deny* the excellent nature and design of John's baptism, raised an objection against it from Christ's baptism, which gave occasion for the complaint that follows here, *ver.* 26. Here is John's baptizing in one place (say they) and Jesus at the same time baptizing in another place, and therefore John's baptism, which his disciples so much applauded, is either, (1.) *Dangerous*, and of *ill consequence* to the peace of the church and state, for you see it opens a door to endless parties. Now John has begun, we shall have every little teacher set up for a baptist presently. Or, (2.) That at the best it was *defective* and *imperfect*. If John's baptism which you cry up thus have any good in it, yonder the baptism of Jesus goes beyond it, so that for your parts you are shaded already by a greater light, and your baptism is soon got out of request. Thus objections are made against the gospel, from the advancement and improvement of gospel light, as if childhood and manhood were contrary to each other, and the superstructure were against the foundation. There was no reason to object Christ's baptism against John's, for they consisted very well together.

4. A complaint which John's disciples made to their master concerning Christ and his baptizing, *ver.* 26. They being *nonplussed* by the fore-mentioned objection, and probably *ruffled* and put into a heat by it, come to their master, and tell him, *Rabbi, he that was with thee*, and was baptized of thee, is now set up for himself, he *baptizeth*, and *all men come to him*, and wilt thou suffer it? Their itch of disputing occasioned this. It is common for men, when they find themselves run aground in the heat of disputation, to fall foul upon those that do them no harm. If these disciples of John had not undertaken to dispute about *purifying*, before they understood the *doctrine of baptism*, they might have answered the objection without being put into a passion. In their complaint they speak respectfully to their own master, *Rabbi*; but speak very slightly of our Saviour, though they did not name him.

1. They suggest that Christ's setting up a baptism of his own was a piece of presumption, very unaccountable; as if John having first set up this right of baptism, he must have the monopoly of it, and as it were a patent for the invention. *He that was with thee beyond Jordan*, as a disciple of thine, behold and wonder, *the same*, the very same *baptizeth*, and takes thy work out of thy hand. Thus the voluntary condescensions of the Lord Jesus, as that of his being baptized by John, are often unjustly and very unkindly turned to his reproach.

2. They suggest that it was a piece of ingratitude to John. *He to whom thou bearest witness baptizeth*; as if Jesus owed all his reputation to the honourable character John gave of him, and yet had very unworthily improved it to the prejudice of John. But Christ needed not John's testimony, *John v.* 36. He reflected more honour upon John than he received from him; yet thus it is incident to us to think that others are more indebted to us than

really they are. And besides Christ's baptism was not in the least an *impachment*, but indeed the greatest *improvement* of John's baptism, which was but to lead the way to Christ's. John was *just* to Christ in bearing witness to him, and Christ's answering his testimony, did rather enrich than impoverish John's ministry.

3. They conclude that it would be a total eclipse to John's baptism, for *all men to come to him*; they that used to follow with us, now flock after him, it is therefore time for us to look about us. It was not indeed strange; but why should John's disciples grieve at that! Note, Aiming at the that *all men came to him*. As far as Christ is *manifested* he will be *magnified*; monopoly of honour and respect, has been in all ages the bane of the church, and the shame of its members and ministers: as also a vying of interests, and a jealousy of rivalry and competition. We mistake if we think that the excelling gifts and graces, and labours and usefulness of one, is a diminution and disparagement to another that has obtained mercy to be faithful, for the Spirit is a free agent, *dispensing to every one severally as he will*. Paul rejoiced in the usefulness even of those that *opposed him*, *Philippi.* 18. We must leave it to God to choose, employ, and honour his own instruments as he pleaseth, and not covet to be *placed alone*.

5. Here is John's answer to this complaint which his disciples made, *ver.* 27, &c. His disciples expected he should have resented this matter as they did: but Christ's *manifestation to Israel* was no surprise to John, but what he looked for: it was no *disturbance* to him, but what he wished for. He therefore checked the complaint, as Moses, *enviest thou for my sake*; and took this occasion to confirm the testimonies he had formerly borne to Christ as superior to him, cheerfully consigning and turning over to him all the interest he had in Israel. In this discourse here, the first minister of the gospel (for so John was) is an excellent pattern to all ministers to *humble themselves* and to *exalt the Lord Jesus*.

First, John here *abaseth himself in comparison with Christ*, *ver.* 27—30. The more others magnify us, the more we must humble ourselves; and fortify ourselves against the temptation of flattery and applause, and the jealousy of our friends for our honour, by remembering our place, and what we are, *1 Cor.* iii. 5.

1. John *acquiesceth* in the divine proposal, and satisfieth himself with that, *ver.* 27. *A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven*, whence every good gift comes, *James i.* 18. A general truth very applicable in this case. Different employments are according to the direction of divine providence: different endowments according to the distribution of the divine grace. *No man can take any true honour to himself*, *Heb.* v. 4. We have as necessary and constant a dependance upon the Grace of God in all the motions and actions of the spiritual life, as we have upon the providence of God in all the motions and actions of the natural life; now this comes in here as a reason, (1.) Why we should not *envy* those that have a larger share of gifts than we have, or move in a larger sphere of usefulness. John minds his disciples, that Jesus had not thus excelled him *except he had received it from heaven*, for as *man and mediator* he *received gifts*; and if God gave him the Spirit without measure, *ver.* 34. shall they grudge at it? The same reason will hold as to others. If God is *pleased* to give to others more ability and success than to us, shall we be displeased at it, and reflect upon him as unjust, unwise and partial? See *Matth.* xx. 15. (2.) Why we should not be *discontented*, though we be inferior to others in gifts and usefulness, and be eclipsed by their excellencies. John was ready to own that it was the gift, the free gift of heaven, that made him a preacher, a prophet, a baptist; it was God that gave him the interest he had in the love and esteem of the people; and if now his interest decline, God's will be done! he that *gives* may *take*. What we *receive* from heaven we must take as it is *given*; Now John never received a commission for a standing *perpetual* office, but only for a *temporary* one, which must soon expire; and therefore when he has fulfilled his ministry, he can contentedly see it go out of date. Some give quite another sense of these words; John had taken pains with his disciples to teach them the reference which his baptism had to Christ, who should come after him, and yet be preferred before him, and do that for them which he could not do; and yet after all they doat upon John, and grudge his preference of Christ above him; well, saith John, I see a *man can receive*, i. e. perceive *nothing, except it be given him from heaven*. The labour of ministers is all lost labour, unless the grace of God makes it effectual. Men do not understand that which is made most plain, nor believe that which is made most evident, unless it be given them from heaven to understand and believe it.

2. John appeals to the testimony he had formerly given concerning Christ, *ver.* 11. you can bear me witness, that I said again and again, *I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him*. See how steady and constant John was in his testimony to Christ, and not as a *reed shaken with the wind*; neither the frowns of the chief priests nor the flatteries of his own disciples could make him change his note. Now this serves here, (1.) As a *conviction* to his disciples of the unreasonableness of their complaint. They had spoken of the witness which their master bore to Jesus, *ver.* 26. Now, saith John, do not you remember what the testimony was that I did bear? Call that to mind, and you will see your own cavil answered. Did I not say, *I am not the Christ*, why then do you set me up as a rival with him that is? Did I not say, *I am sent before him*? Why then doth it seem strange to you that I should stand by and give way to him? (1.) It is a *comfort* to himself, that he had never *given* his disciples any occasion thus to set him up in competition with Christ; but, on the contrary, had particularly *cautioned* them against this mistake, though he might have made a hand of it for himself. It is a satisfaction to faithful ministers, if they have done what they could in their places to prevent any extravagancies that their people run into. John had not only not encouraged them to hope that he was the Messiah, but had plainly told them the contrary: which was now a satisfaction to him. It is a common excuse for those who have undue honour paid them, *Si populus vult decipi, decipiatur*: but that is an ill maxim for them to go by whose business it is to *undecieve* people. *The lip of truth shall be established*.

3. John professeth the great satisfaction he had in the advancement of Christ and his interest. He was so far from *regretting* it, as his disciples did, that he *rejoiced* in it. This he expresseth, *ver.* 29. by an elegant similitude. (1.) He compares our Saviour to the *bridegroom*. *He that has the bride is the bridegroom*. Do all men come to him? It is well, whither else should they go? Has he got the throne in men's affections? Who else should have it? It is his right; to whom should the bride be brought but to the bridegroom? Christ was prophesied of in the Old Testament as a bridegroom, *Psal.* xlv. *The word was made flesh*, that the disparity of nature might not be a *bar to the match*: provision is made for the purifying of the church, that the defilement of sin might be no bar: Christ espouseth his church to himself; he *has the bride*, for he has her love, he has her promise, *the church is subject to Christ*. As far as particular souls are devoted to him in faith and love, so far the bridegroom has the bride. (2.) He compared himself to the *friend of the bridegroom*, who attends upon him to do him honour and service, assists him in prosecuting the match, speaks a good word for him, useth his interest on his behalf, rejoiceth when the match goes on, and most of all when the point is gained and he *hath the bride*. All that John had done in preaching and baptizing was to introduce him, and *draw* he

he was come he had what he wished for. The friend of the bridegroom stands and hears him, stands expecting him and waiting for him, rejoiceth with joy, because of the bridegroom's voice, because he is come to the marriage after he had been long expected. Note, 1. Faithful ministers are friends of the bridegroom, to recommend him to the affections and choice of the children of men; to bring letters and messages from him, for he courts by proxy; and herein they must be faithful to him. 2. The friends of the bridegroom must stand and hear the bridegroom's voice, must receive instructions from him and attend his orders; must desire to have proofs of Christ speaking in them and with them, 2 Cor. xiii. 3. that is the bridegroom's voice. 3. The espousing of souls to Jesus Christ in faith and love, is the fulfilling of the joy of every good minister. If the day of Christ's espousals be the day of the gladness of his heart, Cant. iii. 11. it cannot but be theirs too, who love him and wish well to his honour and kingdom. Surely they have no greater joy.

4. He owns it highly fit and necessary, that the reputation and interest of Christ should be advanced and his own diminished, ver. 30. *He must increase, but I must decrease.* If they grieve at the growing greatness of the Lord Jesus, they will have more and more occasion to grieve, as they have that indulge themselves in envy and emulation. John speaks of Christ's increase and his own decrease not only as necessary and unavoidable, which could not be helped, and therefore must be borne, but as highly just and agreeable, and is intirely satisfied in it. (1.) He was well pleased to see the kingdom of Christ getting ground. *He must increase.* You think he has gained a deal, but it is nothing to what he will gain. Note, The kingdom of Christ is and will be a growing kingdom, like the light of the morning, like the grain of mustard-seed. (2.) He was not at all displeased, that the effect of this was the diminishing of his own interest, *I must decrease.* Created excellencies are under this law, they must decrease; *I have seen an end of all perfection.* Note, 1. The shining forth of the glory of Christ eclipseth the lustre of all other glory. The glory that stands in competition with Christ, that of the world and the flesh, decreaseth and loseth ground in the soul; as the knowledge and love of Christ increase and get ground: but it is here spoken of that which is subservient to him. As the light of the morning increaseth, that of the morning-star decreaseth. 2. If our diminution and abasement may but in the least contribute to the advancement of Christ's name, we must cheerfully submit to it, and be content to be any thing, to be nothing, so that Christ may be all.

Secondly, John Baptist here advanceth Christ, and instructs his disciples concerning him, that they might be so far from grieving that so many come to him, that they might come to him themselves.

1. He instructs them concerning the dignity of Christ's person, ver. 31. *He that cometh from above, that cometh from heaven, is above all.* Here, (1.) He supposeth this divine original, that he came from above, from heaven, which speaks not only his divine extraction, but his divine nature. He had a being before his conception, a heavenly being. None but he that came from heaven was fit to shew us the will of heaven, or the way to heaven. When God would save man, he sent from above. (2.) Hence he infers his sovereign authority, he is above all. Above all things and all persons, *God over all, blessed for evermore.* It is daring presumption to dispute pre-eminence with him. When we come to speak of the honours of the Lord Jesus, we find they transcend all conception and expression, and we can say but this, he is above all. It was said of John Baptist, there was not a greater came from heaven. His descent from heaven put such a dignity upon him, as he was not divested of by his being made flesh: still he was above all.

This he further illustrates by the meanness of those who stood in competition with him. *He that is of the earth is earthly, & so is the son of man; he that is of the earth is of the earth; he that has his original of the earth, has his food out of the earth, has his converse with earthly things, and his concern is for them.* Note, 1. Man has his rise out of the earth; not only Adam at first, but we also still are formed out of the clay, Job xxxiii. 6. Look to the rock whence we were hewn. 2. Man's constitution is therefore earthly; not only his body frail and mortal, but his soul corrupt and carnal, and its bent and bias strong towards earthly things. The prophets and apostles were of the same mould with other men; they were but earthen vessels, though they had a rich treasure lodged in them, and shall these be set upon as rivals with Christ? Let the potters strive with the potters of the earth, but let them not cope with him that come from heaven.

2. Concerning the excellency and certainty of his doctrine. His disciples were displeased, that Christ's preaching was admired and attended upon more than his; but he tells them there was reason enough for it. For,

1. He for his part spoke of the earth, and so do all those that are of the earth. The prophets were men and spoke like men; of themselves they could not speak but of the earth, 2 Cor. iii. 5. The preaching of the prophets and of John was but low and flat compared with Christ's preaching; as heaven is high above the earth, so were his thoughts above theirs. By them God spake on earth, but in Christ he speaketh from heaven.

2. But he that cometh from heaven, is not only in his person, but in his doctrine above all the prophets that ever lived on earth; none teacheth like him. The doctrine of Christ is here recommended to us,

(1.) As infallibly sure and certain, and to be entertained accordingly, ver. 33. *What he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth.* See here, (1.) Christ's divine knowledge; he testified nothing but what he had seen and heard, what he was perfectly apprized of and thoroughly acquainted with. What he discovered of the divine nature and of the invisible world was what he had seen; what he revealed of the mind of God was what he had heard immediately from him, and not at second hand. The prophets testified what was made known to them in dreams and visions by the meditation of angels, but not what they had seen and heard. John was the crier's voice, that said, *Make room for the witness, and keep silence while the charge is given,* but then leave it to the witness to give in his testimony himself, and the judge to give the charge himself. The gospel of Christ is not a doubtful opinion, like an hypothesis or new notion in philosophy, which every one is at liberty to believe or not; but it is a revelation of the mind of God, which is of eternal truth in itself, and of infinite concern to us. (2.) His divine grace and goodness; that which he had seen and heard, because he knew it nearly concerned us, he was pleased to make known to us. When Paul had seen and heard in the third heavens he could not testify, 2 Cor. xii. 4. but Christ knew how to utter what he had seen and heard. Christ's preaching is here called his testifying, to note, (1.) The convincing evidence of it; it was not reported as news by hearsay, but it was testified as evidence given in court, with great caution and assurance. (2.) The affectionate earnestness of the delivery of it; it was testified with concern and importunity, as Acts xviii. 5.

From the certainty of Christ's doctrine John takes occasion, (1.) To lament the infidelity of the most of men: though he testifies what is infallibly true, yet no man receiveth his testimony, i. e. very few, next to none, none in comparison with those that refuse it. They receive it not, they will not hear it, they do not hear it, or give credit to it. This he speaks of, not only as matter of wonder, that such a testimony should not be received, who hath believed our report? how stupid and foolish is the greatest part of

mankind, what enemies to themselves: But as matter of grief; John's disciples grieved that all men come to Christ, ver. 26. they thought his followers too many. But John grieves that no man came to him, he thought them too few. Note, The unbelief of sinners is the grief of saints. It was for this that St. Paul had great heaviness, Rom. ix. 2. (2.) He takes occasion to commend the faith of the chosen remnant, ver. 37. *He that hath received the testimony* (and some such there were, though very few) *hath set to his seal that God is true; God is true though we do not set our seal to it; let God be true and every man a liar; this truth needs not our faith to support it, but by faith we do ourselves the honour and justice to subscribe to his truth, and hereby God reckons himself honoured.* God's promises are all *yea and amen*, by faith we put our amen to them, as Rev. xxii. 20. Observe, He that receives the testimony of Christ, subscribes not only to the truth of Christ, but to the truth of God, for his name is the word of God; the commandments of God and the testimony of Christ are put together, Rev. xii. 17. By believing in Christ we set to our seal, (1.) That God is true to all the promises which he has made concerning Christ, that which he spake by the mouth of all his holy prophets: what he swore to our fathers is all accomplished, and not one iota or tittle of it fallen to the ground, Luke i. 70, &c. Acts xiii. 32, 33. (2.) That he is true to all the promises he has made in Christ; we venture our souls upon God's veracity, being satisfied that he is true, we are willing to deal with him upon trust, and to quit all in this world for a happiness in reversion and out of sight. By this we greatly honour God's faithfulness. Whom we give credit to, we give honour to.

(2.) It is recommended to us as a divine doctrine; not his own, but his that sent him, ver. 29. *For he whom God hath sent, speaks the word of God,* which he was sent to speak and enabled to speak, *for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.* The prophets were as messengers that brought letters from heaven; but Christ came under the character of an ambassador, and treats with us as such; for, (1.) He spoke the words of God, and nothing he said savoured of human infirmity; both substance and language were divine. He proved himself sent of John, John iii. 1. and therefore his words are to be received as the words of God. By this rule we may try the spirits; those that speak as the oracles of God, and prophesy according to the proportion of faith, are to be received as sent of God. (2.) He spoke so as no other prophet did; for *God giveth not the Spirit by measure to him.* None can speak the words of God, without the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11. The Old Testament prophets had the Spirit, and in different degrees. 2 Kings ii. 9, 10. But whereas God gave them the Spirit by measure, 1 Cor. xii. 4. he gave them to Christ without measure; all fulness dwelt in him, the fulness of the Godhead, as unmeasurable fulness. The Spirit was not in Christ as in a vessel, but as in a fountain, as in a bottomless ocean. "The prophets that had the Spirit in a limited manner, only with respect to some particular revelation, sometimes spake of themselves, but he that had the Spirit always residing in him without stint, always spake the words of God." So Dr. Whitby.

3. Concerning the power and authority he is invested with, which gives him the pre-eminence above all others, and a more excellent name than they.

1. He is the beloved Son of the Father, ver. 35. *The father loveth the Son.* The prophets were faithful as servants, but Christ as a Son; they were employed as servants, but Christ beloved as a Son, always his delight, Prov. viii. 30. The father was well pleased in him; not only he did love him, but he doth love him; he continued his love to him even in his estate of humiliation, loved him never the less for his poverty and sufferings.

2. He is Lord of all. The Father, as an evidence of his love to him, hath given all things into his hand. Love is generous. The Father took such a complacency, and had such a confidence in him, that he constituted him the great foffeee in trust for mankind. Having given him the Spirit without measure, he gave him all things, for he was thereby qualified to be master and manager of all. Note, It is the honour of Christ and the unspeakable comfort of all Christians, that the Father hath given all things into the hand of the mediator. (1.) All power; so it is explained, *Matth. xxviii. 18.* All the works of creation being put under his feet, all the affairs of redemption are put into his hand; he is Lord of all. Angels are his servants, devils are his captives. He has power over all flesh; the heathen given him for his inheritance. The kingdom of providence is committed to his administration. He has power to settle the terms of the covenant of peace as the great plenipotentiary, to govern his church as the great law-giver; to dispense divine favours as the great almoner, and to call all to account as the great judge. Both the golden scepter and the iron rod are given into his hand. (2.) All grace is given into his hand as the channel of conveyance; all things, i. e. all those good things which God intended to give to the children of men; eternal life and all its preliminaries. We are unworthy that the Father should give those things into our hands, for we have made ourselves the children of his wrath; he hath therefore appointed the Son of his love to be trustee for us, and the things he intended for us he gives into his hands, who is worthy, and has merited both honours for himself and favours for us. They are given into his hands, by him to be given into ours. This is a great encouragement to faith, that the riches of the new covenant are deposited in so sure, so kind, so good a hand, the hand of him that purchased them for us, and us for himself; who is able to keep all that which both God and believers have agreed to commit to him.

3. He is the object of that faith which is made the great condition of eternal happiness, and herein he has the pre-eminence above all others, ver. 36. *He that believeth on the Son hath life.* We have here the application of what he had said concerning Christ and his doctrine, and it is the conclusion of the whole matter. If God has put this honour upon the Son, we must by faith give honour to him. As God offers and conveys good things to us by the testimony of Jesus Christ, whose word is the vehicle of divine favours, so we receive and partake of those favours by believing the testimony, and entertaining that word as true and good; this way of receiving fitly answers that way of giving. We have here the sum of that gospel, which is to be preached to every creature, *Mark xvi. 16.* Here is,

1. The blessed state of all true Christians, *He that believes on the Son hath everlasting life.* Note, 1. It is the character of every true Christian, that he believes on the Son of God; not only believes him, that what he saith is true, but believes on him, consents to him, and confides in him. The benefit of true Christianity is no less than everlasting life; that is it which Christ came to purchase for us and confer upon us; it can be no less than the happiness of an immortal soul in an immortal God. 2. True believers, even now, have everlasting life; not only they shall have it hereafter, but they have it now. For, (1.) They have very good security for it. The deed by which it passeth, is sealed and delivered to them, and so they have it; it is put into the hands of their guardian for them, and so they have it, though the use be not yet transferred into possession. They have the Son of God, and in him they have life; and the Spirit of God the earnest of this life. (2.) They have the comfortable foretastes of it, in present communion with God and the tokens of his love. Grace is glory begun.

2. The wretched and miserable condition of unbelievers. *He that believeth not the Son is undone, & azidm.* The word includes both incredulity and disobedience. An unbeliever is one that gives not credit to the doctrines

of Christ, nor is in subjection to the government of Christ. Now those that will neither be taught nor ruled by Christ. (1.) They cannot be happy in this world, or that to come; *he shall not see life*, but life which Christ came to bestow. He shall not enjoy it, he shall not have any comfortable prospect of it, shall never come within ken of it, except to aggravate his loss of it. (2.) They cannot but be miserable; the wrath of God abides upon an unbeliever. He is not only under the wrath of God, which is as surely the soul's death, as his favour is its life; but it abides upon him. All the wrath he hath made himself liable to by the violation of the law, if not removed by the grace of the gospel, is bound upon him. God's wrath for his daily actual transgressions lights and lies upon him. Old scores lie undischarged and new ones added. Something done every day to fill the measure, and nothing to empty it. Thus the wrath of God abides, for it is treasured up against the day of the wrath.

C H A P. IV.

It was more than any thing else the glory of the land of Israel, that it was Emanuel's land, Isa. viii. 9. Not only the place of his birth, but the scene of his preaching and miracles. This land in our Saviour's time was divided into three parts; Judea in the south, Galilee in the north, and Samaria lying between them. Now in this chapter we have Christ in each of these three parts of that land. 1. Departing out of Judea, ver. 1—3. 2. Passing through Samaria, which though a visit in transitu, here takes up most room. (1.) His coming into Samaria, ver. 4—6. (2.) His discourse with the Samaritan woman at a well, ver. 7—26. (3.) The notice which the woman gave of him to the city, ver. 27—30. (4.) Christ's talk with his disciples in the mean time, ver. 31—38. (5.) The good effect of this among the Samaritans, ver. 39—42. 3. We find him residing for some time in Galilee, ver. 43—46. And his curing of a nobleman's son there; that was at death's door, ver. 46—54.

1. **W**HEN therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, 2. (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples.) 3. He left Judea and departed again into Galilee.

We read of Christ's coming into Judea, chap. iii. 22. after he had kept the feasts at Jerusalem; and now he left Judea four months before harvest, as is said here, ver. 55. so that it is computed he staid in Judea about six months, to build upon the foundation John had laid there. We have no particular account of his sermons and miracles there, only in general, ver. 1.

1. That he made disciples; he prevailed with many to embrace his doctrine, and to follow him as a teacher come from God. His ministry was successful, notwithstanding the opposition it met with, *Psalm ex. 3. μαθηταί; ποιῶν*; it signifies the same with *μαθηταί*, to disciple. Compare Gen. xii. 5. *The souls which they had gotten*; which they had made; so the word is, which they had made proselytes. Note, It is Christ's prerogative to make disciples: First to bring them to his foot, and then form and fashion them to his will. *Fit non nascitur, Christianus.* Tertullian.

2. That he baptized those whom he made disciples; admitted them by washing them with water, not himself, but by the ministry of his disciples, ver. 2. (1.) Because he would put a difference between his baptism and that of John, who baptized all himself; for he baptized as a servant, Christ as a master. (2.) He would apply himself more to preaching work, which was the more excellent, 1 Cor. i. 17. (3.) He would put honour upon his disciples, by empowering and employing them to do it; and so train them up to farther services. (4.) If he had baptized some himself, they would have been apt to value themselves upon that, and despise others, which he would prevent, as Paul, 1 Cor. i. 13, 14. (5.) He would reserve himself for the honour of baptizing with the Holy Ghost, Acts i. 5. (6.) He would teach us that the efficacy of sacraments depends not on any virtue in the hand that administers them; as also that what is done by his ministers according to his direction, he owns as done by himself.

3. That he made and baptized more disciples than John, not only more than John did at this time, but more than he had done at any time, Christ's converse was more winning than John's. His miracles were convincing, and the cures he wrought gratis were inviting.

4. That the Pharisees were informed of this; they heard what multitudes he had baptized, for they had from his first appearing a jealous eye upon him, and wanted not spies to give them notice concerning him. Observe, (1.) When the Pharisees thought they had got rid of John, (for he was by this clapped up) and were pleasing themselves with that, Jesus appears, who was a greater vexation to them than ever John had been. The witnesses will rise again. (2.) That which grieved them was, that Christ made so many disciples. The success of the gospel exasperates its enemies, and it is a good sign it is getting ground, when the powers of darkness are enraged against it.

5. That our Lord Jesus knew very well what information were given in against him to the Pharisees. It is likely the informers were willing to have their names concealed, and the Pharisees loth to have their designs known; but none can dig so deep as to hide their counsels from the Lord, Isa. xxix. 15. and Christ is here called the Lord. He knew what was told the Pharisees, and how much, it is likely, it exceeded the truth; for it is not likely that Jesus had yet baptized more than John, but so the thing was represented so make him appear the more formidable; see 2 Kings vi. 12.

6. That hereupon our Lord Jesus left Judea, and departed again to go to Galilee.

1. He left Judea, because he was likely to be persecuted there even to the death, such was the rage of the Pharisees against him, and such their impious politics to devour the man-child in his infancy. To escape their designs Christ quitted the country, and went thither, where what he did would be less provoking than just under their nose. For, (1.) His hour was not yet come, (John vii. 38.) the time fixed in the counsels of God, and the Old Testament prophecies for Messiah's being cut off. He had not finished his testimony, and therefore would not surrender or expose himself. (2.) The disciples he had gathered in Judea were not able to bear hardships, and therefore he would not expose them. (3.) Hereby he gave an example to his own rule; *When they persecute you in one city flee to another.* We are not called to suffer, while we may avoid it without sin; and therefore, though we may not for our own preservation change our religion, yet we may change our place. Christ secured himself not by a miracle, but in a way common to men, for the direction and encouragement of his suffering people.

2. He departed into Galilee, because he had work to do there, and many friends and fewer enemies. He went to Galilee now, (1.) Because John's

ministry had now made way for him there; for Galilee which was under Herod's jurisdiction, was the last scene of John's baptism. (2.) Because John's imprisonment had now made room for him there: That light now being put under a bushel, the minds of the people would not be divided between him and Christ. Thus, both the liberties and restraints of good ministers are for the furtherance of the gospel, Phil. i. 12. But for what purpose doth he go into Galilee for safety? Herod the persecutor of John, will never be the protector of Jesus. Chemnitius here notes, *Pii in hac vita quos fugiant habent, ad quos vero fugiant ut in tuto sint non habent, nisi ad te Deus, qui solus refugium nostrum es.*

4. And he must needs go through Samaria. 5. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sichar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour, 7. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her give me to drink. 8. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) 9. Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. 10. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. 11. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water. 12. Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children and his cattle? 13. Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 14. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. 15. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. 16. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. 17. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: 18. For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. 19. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. 20. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain: and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. 21. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. 23. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. 25. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. 26. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

We have here an account of the good Christ did in Samaria, when he passed through that country in his way to Galilee. The Samaritans, both in blood and religion, were mongrel Jews, the posterity of those colonies which the king of Assyria planted there after the captivity of the ten tribes, with whom the poor of the land that were left behind, and many other Jews afterwards incorporated themselves. They worshipped the God of Israel only, to whom they erected a temple on mount Gerizim, in competition with that at Jerusalem. There was great enmity between them and the Jews; the Samaritans would not admit Christ when they saw he was going to Jerusalem, Luke ix. 53. The Jews thought they could not give him a worse name than to say, *He is a Samaritan.* When the Jews were in prosperity the Samaritans claimed kindred to them, Ezra iv. 2. but when they were in distress they were Medes and Persians; see Joseph. Antiq. lib. 11. cap. 8. lib. 12. cap. 7. Now here observe,

1. Christ's coming into Samaria. He charged his disciples not to enter into any city of the Samaritans, Matt. x. 5. viz. not to preach the gospel, or work miracles; nor did he here preach publicly or work any miracles, his eye being to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But what kindness he here did them was accidental, it was only a crumb of the children's bread, that casually fell from the master's table.

1. His road from Judea to Galilee lay through the country of Samaria, ver. 4. He must needs go through Samaria. There was no other way unless he would have fetched a compass on the other side Jordan, a great way about. The wicked and profane are at present so intermixed with God's Israel, that unless we will go out of the world, we cannot avoid going through the company of such, 1 Cor. v. 10. We have therefore need of the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, that we may neither give provocation to them, nor contract pollution by them. We should not go into places of temptation but when we needs must, and then we should not reside in them, but hasten through them. Some think that therefore Christ must needs go through Samaria, because of the good work he had to do there; a poor woman to be converted, a lost sheep to be sought and saved: This was work his heart was upon, and therefore he must needs go this way. It was happy for Samaria, that it lay in Christ's way, which gave him an opportunity

opportunity of calling on them. *When I passed by thee, I said unto thee live, Ezek. xvi. 6.*

2. His baiting place happened to be at a city of Samaria. Now observe, 1. The place described. It was called Sichar; probably the same with Sichern, or Shechem, a place which we read much of in the Old Testament. Thus are the names of places commonly corrupted by tract of time. Shechem yielded the first proselytes that ever came into the church of Israel, Gen. xxxiv. 29—xxxv. 2. and now it is the first place where the gospel is preached out of the commonwealth of Israel; so Dr. Lightfoot observes; as also that the valley of Achor, which was given for a door of hope, hope to the poor Gentiles, ran along by the city, Hos. ii. 15. Abimelech was made king here; it was Jeroboam's royal seat; but the evangelist, when he would give us the antiquities of the place, takes notice of Jacob's interest there, which was more its honour than its crowned heads. 1. Here lay Jacob's ground, the parcel of ground which Jacob gave to his son Joseph, whose bones were buried in it, Gen. xlviii. 22. Josh. xxiv. 32. Probably this is mentioned, to intimate that Christ, when he reposed himself hard by, here took occasion from the ground which Jacob gave Joseph, to meditate on the good report which the elders by faith obtained. Jerom chose to live in the land of Canaan, that the sight of the places might affect him the more with scripture stories. 2. Here was Jacob's well which he digged, or at least used for himself and his family. We find no mention of this well in the Old Testament, but the tradition was, that it was Jacob's well.

2. The posture of our Lord Jesus at this place: *Being wearied with his journey he sat thus on the well.* We have here our Lord Jesus,

1. Labouring under the common fatigue of travellers: He was wearied with his journey. Though it was yet but the sixth hour, and he had performed but half his day's journey, yet he was weary; or because it was the sixth hour, the time of the heat of the day, therefore he was weary. Here we see, (1.) That he was a true man, and subject to the common infirmities of the human nature. Toil came in with sin, Gen. iii. 19. and therefore Christ having made himself a curse for us, submitted to it. (2.) That he was a poor man, else he might have travelled on horseback, or in a chariot. To this instance of meanness and mortification he humbled himself for us, that he went all his journeys on foot. When servants were on horses, princes walked as servants on the earth, Eccles. x. 7. When we are carried easily, let us think on the weariness of our Master. (3.) It should seem he was but a tender man, and not of a robust constitution; it should seem his disciples were not tired, for they went into the town without any difficulty, when their Master sat down and could not go a step further. Bodies of the finest mould are most sensible of fatigue, and can worst bear it.

2. We have him here betaking himself to the common relief of travellers; being wearied, he sat thus on the well. (1.) He sat on the well, an uneasy place, cold and hard; he had no couch, no easy chair to repose himself in, but took to that which was next hand, to teach us not to be nice and curious in the conveniences of this life, but content with mean things. (2.) He sat thus in an uneasy posture: sat carelessly; (incuriose & neglectim) or, he sat so, as people that are wearied with travelling use to sit.

2. His discourse with a Samaritan woman, which is here recorded at large, while Christ's dispute with the doctors, and his discourse with Moses and Elias on the mount are buried in silence.

This discourse is reducible to four heads:

First, They discourse concerning the water, ver. 7—15. Notice is first taken of the circumstances that gave occasion to this discourse.

1. There comes a woman of Samaria to draw water. This intimates her poverty, she had no servant to be a drawer of water; and her industry, she would do it herself. See here, (1.) How God owns and approves of honest humble diligence in our places. Christ was made known to the shepherds when they were keeping their flock. (2.) How the divine providence brings about glorious purposes by events which seem to us fortuitous and accidental. This woman's meeting with Christ at the well may mind us of the stories of Rebekah, Rachael, and Jethro's daughter, who all met with husbands, good husbands, no worse than Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, when they came to the well for water. (3.) How the preventing grace of God sometimes brings people unexpectedly under the means of conversion and salvation. He is found of them that sought him not.

2. His disciples were gone away into the city to buy meat. Hence learn a lesson, (1.) Of justice and honesty. The meat Christ eat, he bought and paid for, as Paul, 2 Thess. iii. 8. (2.) Of daily dependence upon providence; take no thought for the morrow. Christ did not go into the city to eat, but sent his disciples to fetch his meat hither; not because he scrupled eating in a Samaritan city, but, (1.) Because he had a good work to do at that well, which might be done while they were catering. It is wisdom to fill up our vacant minutes with that which is good, that the fragments of time may not be lost. Peter, while his dinner was in getting, fell into a trance, Acts x. 10. (2.) Because it was more private and retired, more cheap and homely to have his dinner brought him hither, than to go into town for it. Perhaps his purse was low, and he would teach us good husbandry; to spend according to what we have, and not go beyond it: However, he would teach us not to affect great things. Christ could eat his dinner as well upon a draw well, as in the best inn in the town. Let us comport with our circumstances.

Now this gave Christ an opportunity of discoursing with this woman about spiritual concerns, and he improved it: he often preached to multitudes that crowded after him for instruction, yet here he condescends to teach a single person, a woman, a poor woman, a stranger, a Samaritan, to teach his ministers to do likewise; as those that know what a glorious achievement it is help to save, though but one soul, from death.

Let us observe the particulars of this discourse.

1. Jesus begins with a modest request for a draught of water; *Give me to drink.* He that for our sakes became poor, here becomes a beggar, that they who are in want, and cannot dig, may not be ashamed to beg. Christ asked for it not only because he needed it, and needed her help to come at it, but because he would draw on further discourse with her; and teach us to be willing to be beholden to the meanest when there is occasion. Christ is still begging in his poor members, and a cup of cold water, like this here, given to them in his name, shall not lose its reward.

2. The woman, though she doth not deny his request, yet quarrels with him because he did carry on the humour of his own nation, ver. 9. *How is it?* Observe, (1.) What a mortal feud there was between the Jews and the Samaritans; the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. The Samaritans were the adversaries of Judah, Ezra iv. 1. were upon all occasions mischievous to them. The Jews were extremely malicious against them, "looked upon them as having no part in the resurrection; excommunicated" and cursed them by the sacred name of God; by the glorious writings of "the tables, and by the curse of the upper and lower house of judgment;" with this law, That no Israelite eat of any thing that is a Samaritan's, "for it is as if he eat swine's flesh." So Dr. Lightfoot, out of Rabbi Tanchum. Note, Quarrels about religion are usually the most implacable of all other. Men were made to have dealings one with another; but if men, because one worships at one temple, and another at another, will deny

the offices of humanity and charity, and common civility, will be morose and unnatural, scornful and censorious, and this under colour of zeal for religion, they plainly shew, that however their religion may be true, they are not truly religious; but pretending to stickle for religion, subvert the design of it.

(2.) How ready the woman was to upbraid Christ with the haughtiness and ill nature of the Jewish nation; *How is it that thou, being a Jew, asked drink of me?* By his dress or dialect, or both, she knew him to be a Jew, and thinks it strange, that he runs not to the same excess of riot against the Samaritans with other Jews. Note, Moderate men of all sides, are, like Joshua and his fellows, *Zeck. iii. 8. men wondered at.* Two things this woman wonders at. (1.) That he should ask this kindness; for it was the pride of the Jews that they would endure any hardship rather than be beholden to a Samaritan. It was part of Christ's humiliation, that he was born of the Jewish nation, which was now not only in an ill state, subject to the Romans, but in an ill name among the nations: With what disdain did Pilate ask, *Am I a Jew?* Thus he made himself, not only of no reputation, but of ill reputation; but herein he has set us an example, of swimming against the stream of common corruptions. We must, like our Master, put on goodness and kindness, though it should be never so much the genius of our country or the humour of our party, to be morose and ill-natured. This woman expected that Christ should be as other Jews were; but it is unjust to charge upon every individual person even the common faults of the community: No rule but has some exceptions. (2.) She wonders he should expect to receive this kindness from her that was a Samaritan: You Jews could deny it to one of our nation, and why should we grant it to one of yours? Thus quarrels are propagated endlessly by revenge and retaliation.

3. Christ takes this occasion to instruct her in divine things, ver. 10. *If thou knowest the gifts of God, thou wouldst have asked.* Observe, (1.) He waves her objection of the feud between the Jews and Samaritans, and takes no notice of it. Some differences are best healed by being slighted, and by avoiding all occasions of entering into dispute about them. Christ will convert this woman, not by shewing that the Samaritan worship was schismatical, though it really was so, but by shewing her her own ignorance and immoralities, and her need of a Saviour. (2.) He possesseth her with an apprehension that she had an opportunity (a fairer opportunity than she was aware of) of gaining that which would be of unspeakable advantage to her. She had not the helps that the Jews had to discern the signs of the times, and therefore Christ tells her expressly, she had now a season of grace; this was the day of her visitation.

(1.) He hints to her what she should know, but was ignorant of. *If thou knowest the gift of God, that is, as the next words explain it, Who is it that saith, give me to drink.* If thou knowest who I am: She saw him to be a Jew, a poor weary traveller, but he would have her know something more concerning him than did yet appear. Note, (1.) Jesus Christ is the gift of God; the richest token of God's love to us, and the richest treasure of all good for us. A gift, not a debt which we could demand from God: not a loan, which he will demand from us again, but a gift, a free gift, John iii. 16. (2.) It is an unspeakable privilege to have this gift of God proposed and offered to us, to have an opportunity of embracing it. He who is the gift of God, is now set before thee, and addresseth himself to thee! it is he that saith, *give me to drink:* this gift comes a begging to thee. (3.) Though Christ is set before us, and sues to us in and by his gospel, yet there are multitudes that know him not. They know not who it is that speaks to them in the gospel, that saith, *give me to drink;* they perceive not that it is the Lord that calls them.

(2.) He hopes concerning her, what she would have done if she had known him; to be sure she would not have given him such a rude and uncivil answer; nay, she would have been so far from affronting him, that she would have made her addresses to him. *Thou wouldst have asked.* Note, (1.) Those that would have any benefit by Christ, must ask for it, must be earnest in prayer to God for it. (2.) Those that have a right knowledge of Christ will seek to him, and if we do not seek unto him, it is a sign we do not know him, Psalm ix. 10. (3.) Christ knows what they that want the means of knowledge would have done, if they had had them, Matt. ix. 21.

(3.) He assures her what he would have done for her, if she had applied herself to him. He would have given thee, (and not have upbraided thee as thou dost me) *living water.* By this living water is meant the Spirit, who is not like the water in the bottom of the well, which he asked for some of, but like living or running water, which was much more valuable. Note, 1. The spirit of grace is as living water; see John vii. 38. Under this similitude the blessings of the Messiah had been promised in the Old Testament, Isa. xlii. 3.—xxxv. 7.—xlv. 3.—lv. 1. Zeck. xiv. 8. The graces of the Spirit and its comforts, satisfy the thirsting soul that knows its own nature and necessity. 2. Jesus Christ can and will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him! for he received that he might give.

4. The woman objects against, and cavils at the gracious intimation which Christ gave her, ver. 11, 12. *Thou hast nothing to draw with;* and besides, *Art thou greater than our Father Jacob?* What he spoke figuratively she took literally; Nicodemus did so too. See what confused notions they have of spiritual things, who are wholly taken up with the things that are sensible. Some respect she pays to his person, in calling him Sir, or Lord; but little respect to what he said, which she doth but banter.

1. She doth not think him capable of furnishing her with any water, no, not this in the well that is just at hand: *Thou hast nothing to draw with and the well is deep.* This she said, not knowing the power of Christ, for he who causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth, needs nothing to draw. But there are those who will trust Christ no farther than they can see him and will not believe his promise, unless the means of the performance of it be visible, as if he were tied to our methods, and could not draw water without our buckets. She asks scornfully, *Whence hast thou this living water?* I see not whence thou canst have it. Note, The springs of that living water which Christ has for those that come to him, are secret and undiscovered: The fountain of life is hid with Christ. Christ has enough for us, though we seek not whence he hath it.

2. She doth not think it possible he should furnish her with any better water than this which she could come at, but he could not. *Art thou greater than our father Jacob who gave us the well.*

1. We will suppose the tradition true, that Jacob himself, and his children and cattle did drink of this well. And we may observe from it, (1.) The power and providence of God in the continuance of the fountains of water from generation to generation, by the constant circulation of the rivers, like the blood in the body, Eccles. i. 7. to which circulation perhaps the flux and reflux of the sea, like the pulses of the heart, doth contribute. (3.) The plainness of the patriarch Jacob, his drink was water, and he and his children drank of the same well with his cattle.

2. Yet allowing that to be true, she was out in several things; as, (1.) In calling Jacob father. What authority had the Samaritans to reckon themselves of the seed of Jacob? They were descended from that mixed multitude which the king of Assyria had placed in the cities of Samaria; what

what have they to do then with Jacob? Because they were the *invaders* of Israel's rights, and the unjust possessors of Israel's lands; were they therefore the *inheritors* of Israel's blood and honour? How absurd were those pretensions? (2.) She is out in claiming this well as Jacob's gift, whereas he did no more give it than Moses gave the *manna*, John vi. 32. But thus we are apt to call the messengers of God's gifts the donors of them; and to look so much at the hands they *pass through*, as to forget the hand they *come from*. Jacob gave it to his sons, not to *them*. Yet thus the church's enemies not only *usurp*, but monopolize the church's privileges. (3.) She was out in speaking of Christ, as not worthy to be compared with our father Jacob. An over-sordid veneration for antiquity makes God's graces in the good people of our own day to be slighted.

5. Christ answers this cavil, and makes it out that the *living water* he had to give, was far better than that of Jacob's well, *ver. 13, 14*. Though she spoke perversely, Christ did not cast her off, but instructed and encouraged her. He shews her,

1. That the water of Jacob's well, yielded but a *transient* satisfaction and supply: *Whoso drinketh of this water shall thirst again*. It is no better than other water, it will quench the present thirst, but the thirst will return, and in a few hours a man will have as much *need*, and as much *desire* of water as ever he had. This speaks, (1.) The *infirmities* of our bodies in this present state; they are still *necessitous* and ever *craving*. Life is a *fire*, a *lamp*, which will soon go out, without continual supplies of fuel and oil: The natural heat preys upon itself. (2.) The *imperfections* of all our comforts in this world, they are not lasting, nor our satisfaction in them remaining. Whatever waters of comfort we drink of, we shall *thirst again*. Yesterday's meat and drink will not do to-day's work.

2. That the living waters he would give, should yield a lasting satisfaction and bliss, *ver. 14*. Christ's gifts appear most valuable, when they come to be compared with the things of this world; for there will appear no comparison between them. Whoever partakes of the Spirit of grace, and the comforts of the everlasting gospel, (1.) He shall *never thirst*, he shall never want that which will abundantly satisfy his soul's desires; they are *longing*, but not *languishing*. A *desiring* thirst he has, nothing more than God, but still more and more of God; but not a *despairing* thirst. (2.) Therefore he shall never thirst, because this water that Christ gives shall be *in him a well of water*. He can never be reduced to extremity, that has in himself a *fountain* of supply and satisfaction. (1.) *Ever ready*, for it shall be *in him*. The principle of grace planted *in him* is the spring of his comfort; see John vii. 38. A good man is *satisfied from himself*, for Christ *dwells in his heart*. The anointing abides in him; he needs not sneak to the world for comfort; the *work*, and the *witness* of the Spirit in the heart, furnisheth him with a firm foundation of hope and an overflowing fountain of joy. (2.) *Never failing*, for it shall be *in him a well of water*. He that has at hand but a bucket of water, needs not thirst as long as that lasts, but that will soon be *exhausted*; but believers have in them a *well of water*, overflowing, ever flowing. The *principles* and *affections* which Christ's holy religion *forms* in the souls of those that are captivated to the power of it, are this *well of water*. (1.) It is *springing up*, ever in motion, which speaks the actings of grace strong and vigorous. If good truths *stagnate* in our souls, like standing water, they do not answer the end of our receiving them: If there be a good treasure in the heart, we must thence bring forth good things. (2.) It is *springing up unto everlasting life*: which speaks, (1.) The *aims* of gracious actings. A sanctified soul has its eye upon heaven; means that, designs that, doth all for that, will take up with nothing short of that. Spiritual life springs up towards its own perfection in eternal life. (2.) The *constancy* of those actings, it will continue springing up till it come to perfection. (3.) The crown of them, eternal life at last. The living water riseth from heaven, and therefore riseth towards heaven: see *Eccl. i. 7*. And now, is not this water better than that of Jacob's well?

6. The woman (whether in jest or earnest is hard to say) begs of him to give her some of this water, *ver. 13*. *Give me this water, that I thirst not*. (1.) Some think she speaks *tauntingly*, and ridicules what Christ had said as meer stuff; and in derision of it, not *desires*, but *challengeth* him to give her some of this water. A rare invention; it will save me a deal of *pain* if I *thirst not*, and a deal of *pains* if I never come *hither to draw*. But, (2.) Others think it was a *well meant*, but weak and ignorant desire. She apprehended that he meant something very good and useful, and therefore saith *amen* at a venture. *Whatever it be*, let me have it; *who will shew me any good?* And ease or saving of labour is a valuable good to poor labouring people. Note. 1. Even those that are weak and ignorant, may yet have some faint and fluctuating desires towards Christ and his gifts, and some good wishes of grace and glory. 2. Carnal hearts, in their best wishes, look no higher than carnal ends. Give it me, saith she, not that I may have everlasting life, which God proposed, but that I come *not hither to draw*.

Secondly, The next subject of discourse with this woman, is *concerning her husband*, *ver. 16, 17, 18*. It was not to let fall the discourse of the water of life, that Christ started this, as many who will bring in any *impertinence* in conversation, that they may drop a serious subject; but it was with a gracious design that Christ mentioned it. What he had said concerning his grace and eternal life, he found had made little impression upon her, because she had not been convinced of sin; therefore waving the discourse about the living water, he sets himself to awaken her conscience, to open the wound of guilt, and then she would more easily apprehend the remedy by grace. And this is the method of dealing with souls; they must first be made *weary* and *heavy laden* under the burden of sin, and then brought to Christ for rest; first pricked to the heart, and then healed. This is the course of spiritual physic; and if we proceed not in this order, we begin at the wrong end.

1. How discreetly and decently Christ introduceth this discourse, *ver. 16*. *Go call thy husband, and come hither*. Now, (1.) This order Christ gave her had a *very good colour*. *Call thy husband* that he may teach thee, and help thee to understand these things, which thou art so ignorant of. The wives that will learn, must *ask their husbands*, 1 Cor. xiv. 35. who must dwell with them, *as men of knowledge*, 1 Pet. iii. 7. *Call thy husband*, that he may learn with thee; that then ye may be *heirs together of the grace of life*. *Call thy husband*, that he may be witness to what passeth between us. Christ would thus teach us to *provide things honest in the sight of all men*, and to study that which is of good report. (2.) As it had a good colour, so it had a *good design*, for from thence he would take occasion to call her sin to remembrance. There is need of art and prudence in giving reproofs; to fetch a compass, as the woman of Tekoa, 2 Sam. xiv. 20.

2. How industriously the woman seeks to evade the conviction, and yet insensibly convicts herself, and ere she is aware, owns her fault; she said, *I have no husband*. Her saying this intimated no more, but that she did not care to have her husband spoken of, nor that matter mentioned any more. She would not have her husband come thither, lest in further discourse the truth of the matter should come out to her shame, and therefore pray go on to talk of something else, *I have no husband*; she would be thought a *maid*, or a *widow*, whereas, though she had no husband, she was neither. The

carnal mind is very ingenious to *shift off* convictions, and to keep them from fastening; careful to *cover the sin*.

3. How closely our Lord Jesus brings home the conviction to her conscience. It is probable, he said more than is here recorded, for she thought he told her all that ever she did, *ver. 29*. but that which is here recorded is concerning her husbands: Here is, (1.) A *surprising narrative* of her *past* conversation; *thou hast had five husbands*. Doubtless it was not her *affliction*, the burying of so many husbands, but her *sin*, that Christ intended to upbraid her with; either she had *eloped* (as the law speaks) had *over-run* her husbands, and married others, or by her undutiful, unclean, disloyal carriage, had provoked them to *divorce* her, or by indirect means had, contrary to law, *divorced* them. Those who make light of such scandalous practices as these, as no more but *nine days wonder*; and as if the guilt were over as soon as the talk is over, should remember that Christ keeps account of all. (2.) A severe reproof of her present state of life; *He whom thou now hast is not thy husband*; Either she was never married to him at all, or he had some other wife; or, which is most probable, her former husband or husbands were living; so that in short, *she lived in adultery*. Yet observe how mildly Christ tells her of it; he doth not call her a *whore*, but tells her, *he with whom thou livest is not thy husband*; and then leaves it to her own conscience to tell her so. Note, Reproofs are ordinarily *most profitable* when they are *least provoking*. (3.) Yet in this he puts a better construction than it would well bear upon what she said by way of shuffle and evasion; *thou hast well said, I have no husband*; and again, *in that saidst thou truly*. What she intended as a *denial of the fact*, that she had none with whom she lived as a husband, he favourably interpreted, or at least turned upon her as a *confession of the fault*. Note, Those who would win souls, should *make the best* of them, whereby they may hope to *work upon* their *good-nature*; for if they *make the worst* of them, they certainly *exasperate* their *ill-nature*.

Thirdly, The next subject of discourse with this woman, is concerning the *place of worship*, *ver. 19—24*. where we may observe,

1. A case of conscience proposed to Christ by the woman, concerning the place of worship, *ver. 19, 20*. And there,

1. The inducement she had to put this case; *Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet*. She doth not deny the truth of what he had charged her with, but by her silence owns the justice of the reproof; nor is she put into a passion by it, as many are when they are touched in a sore place; doth not impute his censure to the general disgust the Jews had to the Samaritans; but (which is a rare thing) can bear to be told of a fault. But that is not all, she goes further, (1.) She speaks respectfully to him, calls him *Sir*. Thus should we *honour* those that deal faithfully with us. This was the effect of Christ's meekness in reproving her; he gave her no ill language, and then she gave him none. (2.) She acknowledges him to be a *prophet*, one that had a correspondence with heaven. Note, The power of the word of Christ in searching the heart, and convincing the conscience of secret sins, is a great proof of its divine authority, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. (3.) She desires some further instruction from him. Many that are not *angry* at their reprovers, nor fly in their faces, yet are *afraid* of them and keep out of their way; but this woman was willing to have some more discourse with him that told her of her faults.

2. The case itself that she propounded concerning the *place of religious worship in public*. Some think she started this to shift off further discourse concerning her sin. Controversies in religion often prove great prejudices to serious godliness; but it should seem she proposed it with a good design; she knew she must worship God, and desired to do it aright; and therefore meeting with a prophet begs his direction. Note, It is our wisdom to improve all opportunities of getting knowledge in the things of God. When we are in company with those that are *fit to teach*, let us be *forward to learn*; and have a *good question* ready to put to those who are able to give a *good answer*.

It was agreed between the Jews and the Samaritans, that God is to be worshipped; those who were such fools as to worship *false* gods, yet were not such brutes as to worship none; and that religious worship is an affair of great importance; men would not *contend* about it, if they were not *concerned* about it. But the matter in variance was, *where* they should worship God. Observe how she states the case.

1. As for the Samaritans; *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain*, near adjoining to this city; and this well; there the Samaritan temple was built by Sanballat; in favour of which she insinuates, (1.) That whatever the temple was, the place was holy; it was mount Gerizim, the mountain on which the blessings were pronounced; and some think the same on which Abraham built his altar, *Gen. xii. 6, 7*. and Jacob his, *Gen. xxxiii. 18*. (2.) That it might plead prescription, for *our fathers* worshipped here. She thinks they have antiquity, tradition and succession on their side; A *vain conversation* often supports itself with this, that it was *received by tradition from our fathers*. But she had little reason to boast of *their fathers*, for when Antiochus persecuted the Jews, the Samaritans, for fear of sharing with them in their sufferings, not only renounced all relation to the Jews, but surrendered their temple to Antiochus, with a request that it might be dedicated to Jupiter Olympius, and called by his name. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. 12. cap. 7*.

2. As to the Jews, ye say, that *in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship*. The Samaritans governed themselves by the five books of Moses, and (some think) received *them only* as canonical: Now though they found frequent mention there of the place God would choose, yet they did not find it named there; and they saw the temple at Jerusalem stripped of many of its ancient glories, and therefore think themselves at liberty to set up another place, altar against altar.

3. Christ's answer to this case of conscience, *ver. 21, &c.* Those that apply themselves to Christ for instruction, shall find him *meek, to teach the meek his way*. Now here,

1. He puts a *slight* upon the question, as she had proposed it, concerning the place of worship, *ver. 21*. *Woman, believe me* as a prophet, and mark what I say, Thou art expecting the *hour to come* when, either by some divine revelation, or some signal providence, this matter shall be decided in favour either of Jerusalem or of mount Gerizim, but I tell thee, the hour is at hand when it shall be no more a question; that which thou hast been taught to lay so much weight on, shall be set aside as a thing *indifferent*. Note, It should cool us in our contests, to think that those things which now fill us, and which we make such a noise about, shall shortly *vanish* and be *no more*; the very things we are striving about are passing away. *The hour comes when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father*. (1.) The object of worship is supposed to continue still the same, God, as a Father; under that notion the very heathen worshipped God, the Jews did so, and probably the Samaritans. (2.) But a period shall be put to all niceness, and all differences about the place of worship. The approaching dissolution of the Jewish economy, and the erecting of the evangelical state shall set this matter *at large*, and lay *all in common*, so that it shall be a thing perfectly indifferent, whether in either of these places, or any other, men worship God, for they shall not be tied to any place;

neither here nor there, but both, and any where, and every where. Note, The worship of God is not now under the gospel appropriated to any place, as it was under the law, but it is God's will that men pray every where, 1 Tim. ii. 8. Mal. i. 11. Our reason teacheth us to consult decency and convenience in the places of our worship; but our religion gives no preference to one place above another in respect of holiness and acceptableness to God. They who prefer any worship merely for the sake of the house or building in which it is performed (though it were as magnificent and as solemnly consecrated as ever Solomon's temple was) forget that the hour is come, when there should be no difference put in God's account; no not between Jerusalem, which had been so famous for sanctity, and the mountain of Samaria, which had been so infamous for impiety.

2. He lays a stress upon other things in the matter of religious worship. When he made so light of the place of worship he did not intend to lessen our concern about the thing itself, which therefore he takes occasion to discourse of more fully.

1. As to the present state of the controversy he determines against the Samaritan worship, and in favour of the Jews, ver. 22. He tells her here,

(1.) That the Samaritans are certainly *in the wrong*; not merely because they worshipped in this mountain, though while Jerusalem's choice was in force, that was sinful, but because they were out in the object of their worship; if the worship itself had been as it should be, its separation from Jerusalem might have been connived at as the *high places* were in the best reigns, but *ye worship ye know not what, or that which ye do not know*; they worshipped the God of Israel the true God, Ezra iv. 2. 2 Kings xvii. 32. but they were sunk into gross ignorance; they worshipped him as the *God of that land*, 2 Kings xvii. 27—33. as a local deity, like the gods of the nations, whereas God must be served as *God*, as the universal Cause and Lord. Note, Ignorance is so far from being the mother of devotion, that it is the murderer of it. Those that worship God ignorantly offer the blind for sacrifice, and it is the sacrifice of fools.

(2.) That the Jews were certainly *in the right*. For,

(1.) *We know what we worship*. We go upon sure grounds in our worship, for our people are catechised and trained up in the knowledge of God, as he has revealed himself in the scripture. Note, Those who by the scriptures have obtained some knowledge of God (a certain though not a perfect knowledge) may worship him comfortably to themselves, and acceptably to him, for they know what they worship. Christ elsewhere condemns the corruptions of the Jews worship, Matt. xv. 9. and yet here defends the worship itself; the worship may be true where yet it is not pure and entire. Observe, Our Lord Jesus was pleased to reckon himself among the worshippers of God, *we worship*. Though he were a Son (and then are the children free) yet learned he this obedience in the days of his humiliation. Let not the greatest of men think the worship of God below them, when the Son of God himself did not.

(2.) *Salvation is of the Jews*, and therefore they know what they worship, and what ground they go upon in their worship. Not that all the Jews were saved, or that it was not possible but that many of the Gentiles and Samaritans might be saved, for in every nation he that fears God, and works righteousness, is accepted of him; But, (1.) The author of eternal salvation comes of the Jews, and appears among them, Rom. ix. 8. and is sent first to bless them. (2.) The means of eternal salvation are afforded to them. The word of salvation (Acts xiii. 26.) was of the Jews: It was delivered to them, and was through them derived to other nations. This was a sure guide to them in their devotions, and they followed it, and therefore knew what they worshipped. To them were committed the oracles of God, Rom. iii. 2. and the service of God, Rom. ix. 4. The Jews therefore being thus privileged and advanced, it was presumption for the Samaritans to vie with them.

2. He describes the evangelical worship, which only God would accept of, and be well pleased with; having shewed that the place is *indifferent*, he comes to shew what is *necessary and essential*. That we worship God *in spirit and in truth*, ver. 23, 24. The stress is not to be laid upon the place where we worship God, but with what *mind* we worship him. Note, The most effectual way to take up differences in the lesser matters of religion, is to be more zealous in the greater. They who daily make it the matter of their care to worship *in the spirit*, one would think, should not make it the matter of their strife whether he should be worshipped here or there. Christ had justly preferred the Jewish worship before the Samaritan, yet here he intimates the imperfection of that. The worship was ceremonial, Heb. ix. 1—10. The worshippers were generally carnal, and much strangers to the inward part of divine worship. Note, It is possible we may be better than our neighbours, and yet not so good as we should be. It concerns us to be right not only in the object of our worship, but in the manner of it; and that is it which Christ here instructs us in. Observe,

1. The great and glorious revolution which should introduce this change. *The hour cometh, and now is*. The fixed, stated time, concerning which it was of old determined when it should come, and how long it should last. The time of its appearance is fixed to an hour, so punctual and exact are the divine counsels; the time of its continuance is limited to an hour, so close and pressing is the opportunity of divine grace, 2 Cor. vi. 2. This hour cometh, it is coming in its full strength, lustre, and perfection, it now is in the embryo and infancy. The perfect day is coming, and now it dawns. 2. The blessed change itself. In gospel times the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. As creatures we worship the Father of all; As Christians we worship the Father of our Lord Jesus. Now the change shall be, (1.) In the nature of the worship, Christians shall worship God, not in the ceremonial observances of the Mosaic institution, but in spiritual ordinances, consisting less in bodily exercise, and animated and invigorated more with a divine power and energy. The way of worship Christ has instituted is rational and intellectual, and refined from those external rites and ceremonies with which the Old Testament worship was both clouded and clogged. This is called true worship, in opposition to that which was typical: The legal services were figures of the true, Heb. ix. 9—24. They that revolted from Judaism to Christianity are said to begin in the spirit, and end in the flesh, Gal. iii. 3. Such was the difference between Old Testament and New Testament institutions.

(2.) In the temper and disposition of the worshippers; and so the true worshippers are good Christians, distinguished from hypocrites; all should, and they will worship God in spirit and in truth. It is spoken of, ver. 23, as their character, and, ver. 24, as their duty. Note, It is required of all that worship God, that they worship him in spirit and in truth. (1.) We must worship God in spirit, Philip. iii. 3. We must depend upon God's spirit for strength and assistance, laying our souls under his influences and operations; we must devote our own spirits to, and employ them in the service of God, Rom. i. 9. must worship him with fixedness of thought, and a flame of affection, with all that is within us. Spirit is sometimes put for the new nature, in opposition to the flesh, which is the corrupt nature; and so to worship God with our spirit, is to worship him with our graces, Heb. xii. 28. (2.) In truth, that is, in sincerity; God requires not only the inward part in our worship, but truth in the inward part, Psal. li. 6. We must mind the

power more than the form; must aim at God's glory, and not to be seen of men; draw near with a true heart, Heb. x. 22.

3. The reasons why God must be thus worshipped.

1. Because in gospel times they and they only are accounted the true worshippers. The gospel erects a spiritual way of worship, so that the professors of the gospel are not true in their profession, do not live up to gospel light and laws if they do not worship God in spirit and in truth.

2. Because the Father seeketh such worshippers of him. This intimates, (1.) That such worshippers are very rare, and seldom met with, Jer. xxx. 21. The gate of spiritual worshipping is strait. (2.) That such worship is necessary, and what the God of heaven insists upon. When God comes to enquire for worshippers, the question will not be, who worshipped at Jerusalem? but who worshipped in spirit, that will be the touchstone. (3.) That God is greatly well pleased with, and graciously accepts of such worship and such worshippers. I have desired it, Psal. cxxxii. 13, 14. Cant. ii. 14. (4.) That there has been, and will be to the end a remnant of such worshippers; his seeking such worshippers, implies his making them such; God is in all ages gathering in to himself a generation of spiritual worshippers.

3. Because God is a spirit. Christ came to declare God to us, John i. 18. And this he has declared concerning him, he declared it to this poor Samaritan woman, for the meanest are concerned to know God; and with this design, to rectify her mistakes concerning religious worship; to which nothing would contribute more than the right knowledge of God. Note, 1. God is a spirit, for he is an infinite and eternal mind; an intelligent Being, incorporeal, immaterial, invisible, and incorruptible. It is easier to say what God is not, than what he is; a spirit has not flesh and bones, but who knows the way of a spirit? If God were not a spirit, he could not be perfect, nor infinite, nor eternal, nor independent, nor the Father of spirits. (2.) The spirituality of the divine nature is a very good reason for the spirituality of divine worship. If we do not worship God who is a spirit in the spirit, we neither give him the glory due to his name, and so do not perform the act of worship; nor can we hope to obtain his favour and acceptance, and so we miss of the end of worship, Matt. xv. 8, 9.

Fourthly, The last subject of discourse with this woman, is concerning the Messiah, ver. 25, 26. Observe here,

1. The faith of the woman by which she expected the Messiah; I know the Messiah cometh—and he will tell us all things. She had nothing to object against what Christ had said; his discourse was, for ought she knew, what might become the Messiah then expected; but from him she should receive it, and in the mean time thinks best to suspend her belief. Thus many have no heart to the price in their hand, (Prov. xvii. 16.) because they think they have a better in their eye, and deceive themselves with a promise that they will learn that hereafter which they neglect now. Observe here,

(1.) Whom she expects; I know that Messiah cometh. The Jews and Samaritans, though so much at variance, agreed in the expectation of the Messiah and his kingdom. The Samaritans received the writings of Moses, and were no strangers to the prophets, nor to the hopes of the Jewish nation; those who knew least knew this, that Messiah was to come; so general and uncontested was the expectation of him; and at this time more raised than ever, for the sceptre was departed from Judah, Daniel's weeks were near expiring, so that she concludes not only he will come, but *he cometh*, he is just at hand, Messiah, which is called Christ. The evangelist, though he retains the Hebrew word Messiah, which the woman used in honour to the holy language, and to the Jewish church, that used it familiarly, yet writing for the use of the Gentiles, he takes care to render it by a Greek word of the same signification, which is called Christ, anointed; giving an example to the apostle's rule, that whatever is spoken in an unknown or less vulgar tongue, should be interpreted, 1 Cor. xiv. 27, 28.

(2.) What she expects from him; He will tell us all things relating to the service of God which are needful for us to know; will tell us that which will supply our defects, rectify our mistakes, and put an end to all our disputes. He will tell us the mind of God fully and clearly, and keep back nothing. Now this implies an acknowledgment, (1.) Of the deficiency and imperfection of the discovery they now had of the divine will, and the rule they had of the divine worship; it could not make the comers thereunto perfect, and therefore they expected some great advance and improvement in matters of religion, a time of reformation. (2.) Of the sufficiency of the Messiah to make this change. He will tell us all things which we want to know, and about which we wrangle in the dark. He will introduce peace, by leading us into all truth, and dispelling the mists of error. It seems this was the comfort of good people in those dark times, that light would arise; if they found themselves at a loss, and run a-ground, it was a satisfaction to them to say, When Messiah comes he will tell us all things; as it may be to us now with reference to his second coming; now we see through a glass, but then face to face.

2. The favour of our Lord Jesus in making himself known to her, ver. 26. I that speak to thee am he. Christ did never make himself known so expressly to any as he did here to this poor Samaritan, and to the blind man, John ix. 37. no, not to John Baptist, when he sent to him, Matt. xi. 4, 5. no, not to the Jews, when they challenged him to tell them whether he was the Christ, John x. 24. But, (1.) Christ would thus put an honour upon such as were poor and despised, James ii. 6. (2.) This woman, for ought we know, had never any opportunity of seeing Christ's miracles, which were then the ordinary method of conviction. Note, To those who have not the advantage of the external means of knowledge and grace, God hath secret ways of making up the want of them; we must therefore judge charitably concerning such; God can make the light of grace shine into the heart even where he doth not make the light of the gospel shine in the face. (3.) This woman was better prepared to receive such a discovery than others were; she was big with expectation of the Messiah, and ready to receive instruction from him. Christ will manifest himself to those who with an honest humble heart desire to be acquainted with him. I that speak to thee am he. See here, 1. How near Jesus Christ was to her, when she knew not who he was, Gen. xxviii. 16. many are lamenting Christ's absence, and longing for his presence, when at the same time he is speaking to them. 2. How Christ makes himself known to us by speaking to us. I that speak unto thee so closely, so convincingly, with such assurance, with such authority, I am he.

27. ¶ And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

28. The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, 29. Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? 30. Then they went out of the city, and came unto him. 31. ¶ In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. 32. But

But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. 33. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat? 34. Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work. 35. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. 36. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together. 37. And herein is that saying true. One soweth, and another reapeth. 38. I sent you to reap that whercon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours. 39. ¶ And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him, for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. 40. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him, that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. 41. And many more believed, because of his own word: 42. And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

We have here the remainder of the story of what happened when Christ was in Samaria, after the long conference he had with the woman.

First, The interruption given to this discourse by the disciples coming. It is likely much more was said than is recorded, but just when the discourse was brought to a head, when Christ had made himself known to her as the true Messiah, *then came the disciples*. The daughters of Jerusalem shall not stir up nor awake my love till he please. (1.) They admired at Christ's converse with this woman; marvelled that he talked thus earnestly (as perhaps they observed at a distance) with a woman, a strange woman alone, he used to be more reserved; especially with a Samaritan woman, that was not of the lost sheep of the house of Israel; they thought their master should be as shy of the Samaritans as the other Jews were, at least that he should not preach the gospel to them. They wondered he should condescend to talk with such a poor contemptible woman, forgetting what despicable men they themselves were, when Christ first called them into fellowship with himself. (2.) Yet they acquiesced in it, they knew it was for some good reason, and some good end, which he was not bound to give them an account of, and therefore none of them asked, *What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?* Thus when particular difficulties occur in the word and providence of God, it is good to satisfy ourselves with this in general, that all is well which Jesus Christ saith and doth. Perhaps there was something amiss in their *marvelling* that Christ talked with the woman, and that it was something like the Pharisees being offended at his eating with publicans and sinners. But whatever they thought, they said nothing: *If thou hast thought evil at any time, lay thy hand upon thy mouth*, to keep that evil thought from turning into an evil word, Prov. xxx. 32. Psal. xxxix. 1, 2, 3.

Secondly, The notice which the woman gave to her neighbours, what an extraordinary person she had happily met with, ver. 28, 29. Observe here,

1. How she forgot her errand to the well, ver. 28. Therefore because the disciples were come, and broke up the discourse, and perhaps she observed they were not pleased with it, she went her way. She withdrew in civility to Christ, that he might have leisure to eat his dinner. She delighted in his discourse, but would not be rude; every thing is beautiful in its season. She supposed that Jesus, when he had dined, would go forward in his journey, and therefore hastened to tell her neighbours, that they might come quickly, *yet a little while is the light with you*. See how she improved time; when one good work was done, she applied herself to another. When opportunities of getting good cease, or are interrupted, we should seek opportunities of doing good; when we have done hearing the word, then is a time to be speaking of it.

Notice is taken of her leaving her water-pot, or pail. (1.) She left it in kindness to Christ, that he might have to drink with his dinner; and fair water was his drink; he turned water into wine for others, but not for himself. Compare this with Rebecca's civility to Abraham's servant, Gen. xxiv. 18. and see that promise, Matt. x. 42. (2.) She left it, that she might make the more haste into the city, to carry thither these good tidings. Those whose business it is to publish the name of Christ, must not encumber or intangle themselves with any thing that will retard or hinder them therein. When the disciples were to be made fishers of men, they must forsake all. (3.) She left her water-pot as one careless of it, being wholly taken up with better things. Note, Those who are brought to the knowledge of Christ, will shew it by a holy contempt of this world, and the things of it. And those who are newly acquainted with the things of God, must be excused, if at first they be so taken up with that new world, into which they are brought, that the things of this world seem to be for a time wholly neglected. Mr. Hildersham, in one of his sermons on this verse, from this instance, largely justifies those who leave their worldly business on week-days to go to hear sermons.

2. How she minded her errand to the town, for her heart was upon it; she went into the city, and said to the men, probably the aldermen, the men in authority, whom, it may be, she found met together upon some public business; or to the men, i.e. to every man she met in the streets; she proclaimed it in the chief places of concourse, *Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: Is not this the Christ?* Observe,

1. How solicitous she was to bring her friends and neighbours acquainted with Christ. When she had found that treasure, she called together her friends and neighbours, as Luke xv. 4. not only to rejoice with her, but to share with her; knowing there was enough to enrich herself and all that would partake with her. Note, They that have been themselves with Jesus, and have found comfort in him, should do all they can to bring others to him; has he done us the honour to make himself known to us? let us do him the honour to make him known to others; nor can we do ourselves a greater honour: This woman becomes an apostle, *Quæ scortum fuerat egressa, regreditur magistra evangelica*, saith Arius. Christ had bid her call her husband, which she thought was warrant enough to call every body. She went into the city, the city where she dwelt, among her kinsfolk and acquaintance. Though every man is my neighbour that I have opportunity of doing good to, yet I have most opportunity, and therefore lie under the most obligations

to do good to those that live near me. *Where the tree falls*, there let it be made useful.

2. How fair and ingenuous she was in the notice she gave them concerning this stranger she had met with.

(1.) She tells them plainly what induced her to admire him. *He has told me all things that ever I did*. No more is recorded but what he told her of her husbands; but it is not improbable he had told her of more of her faults. Or, his telling her of that which she knew he could not by any ordinary means come to the knowledge of, convinced her that he could have told her of all that ever she did. If he has a divine knowledge, it must be an omniscience. He told her that which none knew but God, and her own conscience. Two things affected her, (1.) The extent of his knowledge; we ourselves cannot tell all things that ever we did, many things pass unheeded, and more pass away and are forgotten, but Jesus Christ knows all the thoughts, words and actions, of all the children of men, see Heb. iv. 13. He hath said, *I know thy works*. (2.) The power of his word; this made a great impression upon her, that he told her her secret sins with such an unaccountable power and energy, that being told of one, she is convinced of all, and judged of all. She doth not say, *Come see a man that has told me strange things concerning religious worship, and the laws of it, that has decided the controversy between this mountain and Jerusalem, a man that calls himself the Messiah; but come, see a man that has told me of my sins; she fastens upon that part of Christ's discourse, which one would think she should have been most shy in repeating; but experimental proofs of the power of Christ's word and Spirit, are of all other the most cogent and convincing; and that knowledge of Christ into which we are led by the conviction of sin and humiliation, is most likely to be sound and saving.*

(2.) She invites them to come and see him whom she had conceived so high an opinion of. Not barely come and look upon him, she doth not invite them to him as a *show*, but come and converse with him, come and hear his wisdom as I have done, and you will be of my mind. She would not undertake to manage the arguments which had convinced her in such a manner as to convince others; all that see the evidence of truth themselves are not able to make others see it; but come and talk with him, and you will find such a power in his word, as far exceeds all other evidence. Note, Those who can do little else towards the conviction and conversion of others, may and should bring them to those means of grace, which they themselves have found effectual. Jesus was now at the town's end, now come see him. When opportunities of getting the knowledge of God are brought to our doors, we are inexcusable if we neglect them: shall we not go over the threshold to see him, whose day prophets and kings desired to see?

(3.) She resolves to appeal to themselves, and their own sentiments upon the trial, *Is not this the Christ?* She doth not peremptorily say, He is the Messiah, how clear soever she was in her own mind, and yet she very prudently mentions the Messiah, whom otherwise they would not have thought of; and then refers it to themselves; she will not impose her faith upon them, but only propose it to them. By such fair, but forcible appeals as these, men's judgments and consciences are sometimes taken hold of ere they are aware.

3. What success she had in this invitation, ver. 30. They went out of the city, and came to him. Though it might seem very improbable, that a woman of so small a figure, and so ill a character, should have the honour of the first discovery of the Messiah among the Samaritans; yet it pleased God to incline their hearts to take notice of her report, and not to slight it as an idle tale. Time was, when lepers were the first that brought tidings to Samaria of a great deliverance, 2 Kings vii. 3. &c. They came unto him; did not send for him into the city to them; but, in token of their respect to him, and the earnestness of their desire to see him, they went out to him: Those that would know Christ, must meet him where he records his name.

Thirdly, Christ's discourse with his disciples, while the woman was absent, ver. 31—34. See how industrious our Lord Jesus was to redeem time, to husband every minute of it, and to fill up the vacancies of it. When the disciples were gone into the town, his discourse with the woman was edifying, and suited to her case; when she was gone into the town, his discourse with them was no less edifying, and suited to their case; it were well if we could thus gather up the fragments of time, that none of it may be lost.

Two things are observable in this discourse:

1. How Christ expresseth the delight which he himself had in his work. His work was to seek and save that which was lost, to go about doing good. Now this work we here find him wholly taken up with.

For, 1. He neglected his meat and drink for his work. When he sat down upon the well he was weary and needed refreshment; but this opportunity of saving souls made him forget his weariness and hunger. And he minded his food so little, that (1.) His disciples were forced to invite him to it; they prayed him, they pressed him, saying, *Master, eat*. It was an instance of their love to him, that they invited him, lest he should be faint and sick for want of some support; but it was a greater instance of his love to souls, that he needed invitation; let us learn hence a holy indifference, even to the needful supports of life, in comparison with spiritual things. (2.) He minded it so little, that they suspected he had meat brought him in his absence, ver. 33. *Has any man brought him ought to eat?* He had so little stomach to his dinner, that they were ready to think he had dined already. They that make religion their business, when any of its affairs are to be attended, will prefer them before their food; as Abraham's servant, that would not eat till he had told his errand, Gen. xxiv. 33. and Samuel, that would not sit down till David was anointed, 1 Sam. xvi. 11.

2. He made his work his meat and drink. The work he had done in instructing the woman; the work he had to do among the Samaritans; the prospect he now had of doing good to many, this was meat and drink to him; it was the greatest pleasure and satisfaction imaginable. Never did a hungry man, or an epicure, expect a plentiful feast with so much desire, nor feed upon its dainties with so much delight, as our Lord Jesus expected, and improved an opportunity of doing good to souls. Concerning this he saith, (1.) That it was such meat as the disciples knew not of. They did not imagine that he had any design or prospect of planting his gospel among the Samaritans; this was a piece of usefulness they never thought of. Note, Christ by his gospel and Spirit doth more good to the souls of men, than his own disciples know of or expect. This may be said of good Christians too who live by faith, that they have meat to eat which others know not of; joy which a stranger doth not intermeddle with. Now this word made them ask, *Has any man brought him ought to eat?* So apt were even his own disciples to understand him after a corporal and carnal manner when he used similitudes. (2.) That the reason why his work was his meat and drink, was because it was his Father's work, his Father's will, ver. 34. *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me*. Note, (1.) The salvation of sinners is the will of God, and the instruction of them in order thereunto is his work: See 1 Tim. ii. 4. There is a chosen remnant in whose salvation is in a particular manner his will. (2.) Christ was sent into the world on this errand to bring people to God; to know him, and to be happy in him. (3.) He made this work his business and delight. When his body needed food, his mind was so taken up with this that he forgot both hunger and thirst,

thirst, both meat and drink. Nothing could be more grateful to him than doing good; when he was invited to *meat* he went, that he might *do good*, for that was his meat always. (4.) He was not only ready upon all occasions to go to his work, but he was *earnest* and in care to go *through* it, and to *finish his work* in all the parts of it. He resolved never to quit it, or lay it down till he could say, *It is finished*. Many have zeal to carry them out at first, but not zeal to carry them *on* to the last; but our Lord Jesus was intent upon *finishing his work*. Our Master has herein left us an example, that we may learn to do the will of God as he did. (1.) With diligence and close application, as those that make a business of it. (2.) With delight and pleasure it is, as in our element. (3.) With constancy and perseverance, not only minding to do, but aiming to finish our work.

2. See here, how Christ having expressed his delight in *his work*, *excites* his disciples to *diligence in their work*; they were workers *with him*, and therefore should be workers *like him*; and make their work their *meat* as he did. The work they had to do was to *preach the gospel*; and by it to set up the kingdom of the Messiah. Now this work he here compares to *harvest work*, which is the gathering in of the fruits of the earth; and this similitude he prosecutes throughout this discourse, *ver. 35—38*. Note, Gospel time is harvest time, and gospel work harvest work. The harvest is before *appointed* and expected, so was the gospel. Harvest time is *busy* time; all hands must be then at work; every one must work for *himself*, that he may reap of the graces and comforts of the gospel: ministers must work for *God*, to gather in souls to him. Harvest time is *opportunity*, a short and limited time, which will not last always; and harvest work is work that must be done *then*, or not at all; so the time of the enjoyment of the gospel is a particular season, which must be improved for its proper purposes; for once past, it cannot be recalled.

The disciples were to gather in a harvest of souls for Christ. Now he here suggests three things to quicken them to diligence.

1. That it was *necessary work*, and the *occasion* for it very urgent and pressing, *ver. 35*. *Ye say, it is four months to harvest*, but I say, *The fields are already white*. Here is, (1.) A saying of Christ's disciples concerning the *corn-harvest*: there are *yet four months*, and then comes harvest, which may be taken either *generally*; you say for the encouragement of the sower at seed-time, that it will be but four months to the harvest. With us it is but about four months between the barley seedness, and the barley harvest, probably it was so with them as to other grain; or particularly now at this time you reckon it will be four months to next harvest, according to the ordinary course of providence. The Jews harvest began at the passover, about Easter, much earlier in the year than ours; by which it appears that this journey of Christ from Judea to Galilee was in the winter, about the end of November, for he travelled *all weathers* to do good. God has not only promised us a harvest every year, but has appointed the weeks of harvest; so that we know when to expect it, and take our measures accordingly. (2.) Here is a saying of Christ's concerning the *gospel harvest*; his heart was as much upon the fruits of his gospel, as the hearts of others were upon the fruits of the earth; and to that he would lead the thoughts of his disciples. *Look, the fields are already white unto the harvest*. 1. Here in this place where they now were, there was harvest-work for him to do. They would have him to *eat*, *ver. 31*. Eat, saith he, I have other work to do that is more needful; look what crowds of Samaritans are coming out of the town over the fields, that are ready to receive the gospel; probably there were many now in view. People's forwardness to hear the word, is a great excitement to ministers diligence and liveliness in preaching it.

2. In *other places*, all the country over, there was harvest work enough for them all to do. Consider the *regions*; think of the state of the country, and you will find there are multitudes as ready to receive the gospel, as a field of corn that is fully ripe is ready to be reaped. The fields were now made *white to the harvest*. (1.) By the *decree of God* revealed in the prophecies of the Old Testament. Now was the time when the gathering of the people should be to Christ, *Gen. xlv. 10*. when great accessions should be made to the church, and the bounds of it should be enlarged, and therefore it was time for them to be busy. It is a great encouragement to us to engage in any work for God, if we understand by the signs of the times that this is the proper season for that work, for then it will prosper. (2.) By the *disposition of men*. John Baptist had made ready a people prepared for the Lord, *Luke i. 17*. Since he began to preach the kingdom of God every man pressed into it, *Luke xvi. 16*. This therefore was a time for the preachers of the gospel to apply themselves to their work with the utmost vigour; to *thrust in their sickle*, when the harvest was ripe, *Rev. xiv. 15*. It was necessary to work now, pity such a season should be let slip. If the corn that is ripe be not reaped, it will *shed* and be lost, and the fowls will pick it up. If souls that are under convictions, and have some good inclinations be not helped now, their hopeful beginnings will come to nothing, and they will be a prey to pretenders: It was also *easy* to work now; when the people's hearts are *prepared*, the work will be done *suddenly*, *2 Chron. xxix. 36*. It cannot but quicken ministers to take pains in preaching the word, when they observe that people *take pleasure* in hearing it.

2. That it was *profitable and advantageous work*, which they themselves would be gainers by, *ver. 36*. *He that reapeth receiveth wages*, and so shall you. Christ has undertaken to pay those well whom he employs in his work; for he will never do as Jchoiakim did that *used his neighbour's service without wages*, *Jer. xxii. 13*. or those who *by fraud kept back the hire of those particularly who reaped down their corn-fields*, *James v. 4*. Christ's reapers, though they cry to him day and night, shall never have cause to cry *against him*, nor to say they served a hard master. He that reapeth not only shall receive wages, but *doth* receive it. There is a present reward in the service of Christ, and his work is its own wages.

(1.) Christ's reapers have *fruit*; he *gathereth fruit unto life eternal*, i. e. he shall both save himself and those that hear him, *1 Tim. iv. 16*. If the faithful reaper save his own soul, that is fruit abounding to his account, it is fruit gathered to *life eternal*. And if over and above this he be instrumental to save the souls of others too, there is *fruit gathered*; souls gathered to Christ are fruit, good fruit, the fruit that Christ seeks for, *Rom. i. 13*. it is gathered for Christ, *Cant. viii. 11, 12*. it is gathered to *life eternal*. This is the comfort of faithful ministers, that their work has a tendency to the eternal salvation of precious souls.

(2.) They have *joy*; that he that sows, and they that reap, may rejoice together. The minister who is the happy instrument of beginning a good work is he that sows, as John Baptist was: He that is employed to carry it on and perfect it, is he that reaps, and both shall rejoice together. Note, 1. Though God is to have all the glory of the success of the gospel, yet faithful ministers may themselves take the comfort of it. The reapers share in the *joy of harvest*, though the profits belong to the master, *1 Thess. ii. 19*. 2. Those ministers who are variously gifted and employed, should be so far from envying one another, that they should rather mutually rejoice in each other's success and usefulness. Though all Christ's ministers are not alike *serviceable*, not alike *successful*, yet if they have obtained mercy of the Lord to be *faithful*, they shall all enter together into the *joy of their Lord* at last.

3. That it was *easy work*, and work that was half done to their hands by those that were gone before them, *ver. 37, 38*. *One soweth, and another reapeth*. This sometimes speaks a grievous judgment upon him that sows, *Mic. vi. 15*. *Deut. xxviii. 30*. *Thou shalt sow, and another shall reap*; as *Deut. vi. 11*. *Houses full of all good things which thou filledst not*. So here, Moses and the prophets and John Baptist had *pared* the way to the gospel, had sown the good seed which the New Testament ministers did in effect but gather the fruit of. *I send you to reap that whereon ye bestowed*, in comparison, *no labour*, *Isa. xl. 3, 4, 5*.

This speaks two things concerning the Old Testament ministry. (1.) That it was very much *short* of the New Testament ministry. Moses and the prophets sowed, but they could not be said to reap, so little did they see of the fruit of their labours. Their writings have done much more good since they left us than ever their preaching did. (2.) That it was very much *serviceable* to the New Testament ministry, and made way for it; the writings of the prophets, which were read in the synagogues every sabbath-day, raised people's expectations of the Messiah, and so prepared them to bid him welcome. Had it not been for the seed sown by the prophets, this Samaritan woman could not have said, *We know that the Messiah cometh*. The writings of the Old Testament are in some respects more useful to us than they could be to those to whom they were first written, because better understood by the accomplishment of them. See *1 Pet. i. 12*. *Heb. iv. 2 Rom. xvi. 25, 26*.

This also speaks two things concerning the ministry of the apostles of Christ. (1.) That it was a *fruitful* ministry; they were reapers that gathered in a great harvest of souls to Jesus Christ, and did more in seven years towards the setting up of the kingdom of God among men, than the prophets of the Old Testament had done in twice so many ages. (2.) That it was much *facilitated*, especially among the Jews, to whom they were first sent, by the writings of the prophets. The prophets sowed in *tears*, crying out, *we have laboured in vain*; the apostles reaped in *joy*, saying, *Thanks be to God, who always causeth us to triumph*. Note, From the labours of ministers that are dead and gone much good fruit may be reaped by the people that survive them, and the ministers that succeed them. John Baptist, and those that assisted him, had *laboured*, and the disciples of Christ entered into their labours, built upon their foundation, and reaped the fruit of what they sowed. See what reason we have to bless God for those that are *gone before us*; for their preaching and their writing; for what they did and suffered in their day, for we are *entered into their labours*; their studies and services have made our work the easier. And when the ancient and modern labourers, those that came into the vineyard at the third hour, and those that came in at the eleventh, meet in the day of accounts, they will be so far from envying one another the honour of their respective services, that both they that sowed and they that reaped shall rejoice together; and the great Lord of the harvest shall have the glory of all.

Fourthly, The good effect which this visit Christ made to the Samaritans (*en passant*) had upon them, and the fruit which was now presently gathered among them, *ver. 39—42*. See what impressions were made on them.

1. By the *woman's testimony* concerning Christ; though a single testimony, and of one of no good report; and the testimony no more but this, *He told me of all that ever I did*; yet it had a good influence upon many. One would have thought his telling the woman of her secret sins, should have made them afraid of coming to him, lest he should tell them also of their faults; but they will venture that, rather than not be acquainted with one that they had reason to think was a prophet. And two things they were brought to,

1. To *credit Christ's word*, *ver. 39*. *Many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman*. So far they believed on him, that they took him for a prophet, and were desirous to know the mind of God from him; this is favourably interpreted a believing on him. Now observe,

(1.) Who they were that believed; *many of the Samaritans*, who were not of the house of Israel. Their faith was not only an *aggravation of the unbelief* of the Jews, from whom better might have been expected, but an *earnest of the faith* of the Gentiles, who would welcome that which the Jews rejected.

(2.) Upon what inducement they believed; *for the saying of this woman*. See here, (1.) How God is sometimes pleased to use very weak and unlikely instruments for the beginning and carrying on of a good work. A little maid directed a great prince to Elisha, *2 Kings v. 2*. (2.) How great a matter a little fire kindles: Our Saviour, by instructing one poor woman, spread instruction to a whole town. Let not ministers be either *careless* in their preaching or *discouraged* in it, because their hearers are *few* and *mean*, for by doing good to them, good may be conveyed to *more*, and those that are more considerable: If they *teach every man his neighbour*, and every man his brother, a great number may learn at second hand. Philip preached the gospel to a single gentleman in his chariot upon the road, and he not only received it himself, but carried it into his country, and propagated it there. (3.) See how good it is to speak *experimentally* of Christ and the things of God. This woman could say little of Christ, but what she did say she spoke feelingly; *He told me all that ever I did*. Those are most likely to do good that can tell what God has done *for their souls*, *Psalms lxvi. 16*.

2. They were brought to *court his stay* among them, *ver. 40*. when they were come to him, they besought him that he would tarry with him. Upon the woman's report they believed him to be a prophet, and came to him; and when they saw him, the meanness of his appearance, and the manifest poverty of his outward condition, did not lessen their esteem of him and expectations from him, but still they respected him as a prophet. Note, There are hopes of those who are got over the vulgar prejudices that men have against *true worth in a low estate*. Blessed are they that are not offended in Christ at the first sight. So far were they from being offended in him, that they begged he would tarry with them. (1.) That they might *testify their respects to him*, and treat him with the honour and kindness due to his character. God's prophets and ministers are welcome guests to all those who sincerely embrace the gospel; as to Lydia, *Acts xvi. 15*. (2.) That they might receive instruction from him. Those that are taught of God are truly desirous to learn more, and to be better acquainted with Christ. Many would have flocked to one that would tell them *their fortune*, but these flocked to one that would tell them *their faults*; tell them of sin and duty. The historian seems to lay an emphasis upon their being Samaritans, as *Luke x. 33—xvii. 16*. The Samaritans had not that reputation for religion that the Jews had; yet the Jews who saw Christ's miracles drove him from them, while the Samaritans who saw not his miracles, nor shared in his favours, invited him to them. The *proof* of the gospel's success is not always according to the *probability*, nor what is *expected* according to what is *expected* either way. The Samaritans were taught by the custom of their country to be shy of conversation with the Jews. There were Samaritans that refused to let Christ go through their town, *Luke ix. 52*. yet these begged him to tarry with them. Note, It adds much to the praise of

of our love to Christ and his word, if it conquers the prejudices of education and custom, and sets light by the censures of men.

Now we are told that Christ granted their request. (1.) *He abode there.* Though it was a city of the Samaritans near adjoining to their temple, yet when he was invited he tarried there; though he was upon a journey, and had further to go, yet when he had an opportunity of doing good he abode there. That is no real hindrance that will further our account. Yet he abode there but *two days*, because he had other places to visit and other work to do, and those two days were as many as came to the share of this city, out of the few days of our Saviour's sojourning upon earth.

2. We are told what impressions were made upon them by Christ's own word, and his personal converse with them, *ver. 41, 42.* what he said and did there is not related, whether he healed their sick or no; but it is intimated in the effect, that he said and did that which convinced them he was the Christ; and the labours of a minister are best told by the good fruit of them. Their hearing of him had a good effect, but now their eyes see him; and the effect of that was,

1. That their number grew, *ver. 41.* *Many more believed:* many that would not be persuaded to go out of the town to him, yet when he came among them were wrought upon to believe in him. Note, It is comfortable to see the number of believers; and sometimes the zeal and forwardness of some may be a means to provoke many, and to stir them up to a holy emulation, *Rom. xi. 14.*

2. That their faith grew. Those who had been wrought upon by the report of the woman, now saw cause to say, *Now we believe not for thy saying,* *ver. 42.*

Here are three things in which their faith grew:

1. In the matter of it, or that which they did believe. Upon the testimony of the woman they believed him to be a prophet, or some extraordinary messenger from heaven; but now they have conversed with him, they believe that he is the Christ, the anointed one, the very same that was promised to the fathers, and expected by them; and that being the Christ, he is the Saviour of the world; for that was the work to which he was anointed, to save his people from their sins. They believed him to be the Saviour, not only of the Jews but of the world, which they hoped would take them in, though Samaritans, for it was promised that it should be *salvation to the ends of the earth*, *Isa. xlix. 6.*

2. In the certainty of it; their faith now grew up to a full assurance; we know that this is indeed the Christ; *αληθως*; not a pretended Christ, but a real one; not a typical Saviour, as many under the Old Testament, but truly one. Such an assurance as this of divine truths is what we should labour after; not only we think it probable, and are willing to suppose that Jesus may be the Christ, but we know that he is indeed the Christ.

3. In the ground of it, which was a kind of spiritual sensation and experience: *Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves.* They had before believed for her saying, and it was well, it was a good step; but now they find further and much firmer footing for their faith: *now we believe, because we have heard him ourselves,* and have heard such excellent and divine truths, accompanied with such commanding power and evidence, that we are abundantly satisfied and assured that this is the Christ. This is like what the queen of Sheba said of Solomon, *1 Kings x. 6, 7.* *The one half was not told me.* The Samaritans who believed for the woman's saying, now gained further light, for to him that hath shall be given: He that is faithful in a little shall be trusted with more.

In this instance we may see how faith comes by hearing. (1.) Faith comes to the birth by hearing the report of men. These Samaritans for the sake of the woman's saying, believed so far as to come and see, to come and make trial. Thus the instructions of parents and preachers, and the testimony of the church and our experienced neighbours, recommend the doctrine of Christ to our acquaintance, and incline us to entertain it as highly probable. But, (2.) Faith comes to its growth, strength and maturity, by hearing the testimony of Christ himself; and this goes further, and recommends his doctrine to our acceptance, and obligeth us to believe it as undoubtedly certain. We were induced to look into the scriptures, by the saying of those who told us, that in them they had found eternal life; but when we ourselves found it in them too, have experienced the enlightening, convincing, regenerating, sanctifying, comforting power of the word, now we believe, *not for their saying, but because we have searched them ourselves:* And our faith stands not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, *1 Cor. ii. 5.* *1 John v. 9, 10.*

Thus was the seed of the gospel sown in Samaria; what effect there was of this afterward doth not appear, but we find that four or five years after, when Philip preached the gospel in Samaria he found such blessed remains of this good work now wrought, that the people with one accord gave heed to those things which Philip spoke, *Acts viii. 5, 6-8.* But as some were pliable to good, so were others to evil, whom Simon Magus bewitched with his forceries, *ver. 9, 10.*

43. ¶ Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee. 44. For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. 45. Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast. 46. So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. 47. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. 48. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. 49. The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. 50. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. 51. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. 52. Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. 53. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole

house. 54. This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.

In these verses we have,

First, Christ's coming into Galilee, *ver. 43.* Though he was as welcome among the Samaritans as he could be any where, and had better success, yet after two days he left them, not so much because they were Samaritans, and he would not confirm those in their prejudices against him, who said, *He is a Samaritan*, (*John viii. 48.*) but because he must preach to other cities, *Luke iv. 43.* *He went into Galilee,* for there he spent much of his time. Now see here,

1. Whither Christ went; into Galilee, into the country of Galilee, but not to Nazareth, which was strictly his own country; he went among the villages, but declined going to Nazareth, the head city, for a reason here given, which Jesus himself testified, who knew the temper of his countrymen, the hearts of all men, and the experiences of all prophets, and it is this, That a prophet has no honour in his own country. Note, (1.) Prophets ought to have honour, because God has put honour upon them, and we do or may receive benefit by them. (2.) The honour due to the Lord's prophets has very often been denied them, and contempt put upon them. (3.) This due honour is most frequently denied them in their own country, see *Luke iv. 24.* *Matt. xiii. 57.* not that it is universally true; no rule but hath some exceptions, but it holds for the most part. Joseph, when he began to be a prophet, was most hated by his brethren; David disdained by his brother, *1 Sam. xvii. 28.* Jeremiah maligned by the men of Anathoth, *Jer. xi. 21.* Paul by his countrymen the Jews; and Christ's near kinsmen spoke most slightly of him, *John vii. 5.* Men's pride and envy make them scorn to be instructed by those, that, when time was, were their school-fellows and playfellows. Desire of novelty, and of that which is far fetched, and dear bought, and seems to drop out of the sky to them, makes them despise those persons and things which they have been long used to, and know the rise of. (4.) It is a great discouragement to a minister to go among a people that have no value for him or his labours. Christ would not go to Nazareth, because he knew how little respect he should have there. (5.) It is just with God to deny his gospel to those that despise the ministers of it. They that mock the messengers forfeit the benefit of the message, *Matt. xxi. 35-41.*

2. What entertainment he met with among the Galileans in the country, *ver. 45.* They received him, bade him welcome, and cheerfully attended on his doctrine. Christ and his gospel are not sent in vain; if they had not honour with some, they shall have with others. Now the reason given why these Galileans were so ready to receive Christ is, because they had seen the miracles he did at Jerusalem, *ver. 45.* Observe, (1.) They went up to Jerusalem at the feast, the feast of the passover. The Galileans lay very remote from Jerusalem, and their way thither lay through the country of the Samaritans, which was troublesome for a Jew to pass through, worse than Bala's valley of old; yet in obedience to God's command, they went up to the feast, and there they became acquainted with Christ. Note, They that are diligent and constant in attending on public ordinances, some time or other meet with more spiritual benefit than they expect. (2.) At Jerusalem they saw Christ's miracles, which recommended him and his doctrine very much to their faith and affections. The miracles were wrought for the benefit of them at Jerusalem, yet the Galileans, who were accidentally there, got more advantage by them, than they did for whom they were chiefly designed. Thus the word preached to a mixed multitude, may perhaps edify occasional hearers more than the constant auditory.

3. What city he went to; when he would go to a city he chose to go to Cana of Galilee, where he had made the water wine, *ver. 46.* thither he went to see if there were any good fruits of that miracle remaining; and if there were, to confirm their faith, and to water what he had planted. The evangelist mentions this miracle here to teach us to keep us in remembrance what we have seen of the works of Christ.

Secondly, His curing of the nobleman's son that was sick of a fever. This story is not recorded by any other of the evangelists; it comes in *Matt. iv. 23.*

Observe, 1. Who the petitioner was, and who the patient; the petitioner was a nobleman, the patient was his son: There was a certain nobleman, *Regulus*, so the Latin, a little king; so called, either for the largeness of his estate, or the extent of his power, or the royalties that belonged to his manor. Some understand it as speaking his preferment, he was a courtier, in some office about the king; others, as speaking his party, he was an Herodian, a royalist, a prerogative man, one that espoused the interest of the Herods, father and son; perhaps it was Chuza, Herod's steward, *Luke viii. 3.* or Manaen, Herod's foster-brother, *Acts xiii. 1.* There were faints in Caesar's household. The father a nobleman, and yet the son sick; for dignities and titles of honour will be no security to persons and families from the assaults of sickness and death. It was fifteen miles from Capernaum, where this nobleman lived, to Cana, where Christ now was, yet this affliction in his family sent him so far to Christ.

2. How the petitioner made his application to the physician. Having heard that Jesus was come out of Judea to Galilee, and finding that he did not come towards Capernaum, but turned off towards the other side of the country, he went to him himself, and besought him to come and heal his son, *ver. 47.* See here, (1.) His tender affection to his son, that when he was sick he would spare no pains to get help for him. (2.) His great respect to our Lord Jesus; that he would come himself to wait upon him, when he might have sent a servant; and that he besought him, when, as a man in authority, some would think he might have ordered his attendance. The greatest men when they come to God must become beggars, and sue *sub forma pauperis.*

As to the errand he came upon, we may observe a mixture in his faith. (1.) There was sincerity in it, he did believe that Christ could heal his son, though his disease was dangerous. It is likely he had physicians to him, who had given him over, but he believed that Christ could cure him when the case seemed deplorable. (2.) Yet there was infirmity in his faith, he believed that Christ could heal his son, but, as it should seem, he thought he could not heal him at a distance, and therefore he besought him that he would come down and heal him, expecting, as Naaman did, that he will come and strike his hand over the patient, as if he could not cure him but by a physical contact. Thus we are apt to limit the Holy One of Israel, and to stint him to our forms. The centurion, a Gentile, a soldier, was so strong in faith, as to say, *Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof*, *Matt. viii. 8.* This nobleman, a Jew, must have Christ to come down, though it was a good day's journey, and delays of a cure unless he come down, as if he must reach Christ now to work. We are encouraged to pray, but we are not allowed to prescribe; *Lord, heal me, but whether with a word or a touch, Thou wilt be done.*

3. The gentle rebuke he met with in this address, *ver. 48.* Jesus said to him, I see how it is, *Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe;* as the Samaritans did, though they saw no signs and wonders, and therefore

I must work miracles a new you. Though he was a nobleman, and now in grief about his son, and had shewed great respect to Christ in coming so far to him, yet Christ gives him a reproof; men's dignity in the world shall not exempt them from the rebukes of the word or providence: for Christ reproveth not *after the hearing of his ears*, but *with equity*, Isa. xi. 3. Observe, Christ will shew him his sin and weakness, to prepare him for mercy, and grant him his request. Christ humbles those first with his *lessons*, whom he intends to honour with his *favours*. The Comforter shall first convince. Herod longed to see some miracle, Luke xxiii. 8. and this courtier was of the same mind, and the generality of the people too.

Now that which is blamed, is, (1.) That whereas they had heard by credible and incontestable report of the miracles he had wrought in other places, they would not believe except they saw them with their own eyes, Luke iv. 23. They must be *honoured*, and they must be *honoured*, or they will not be *convinced*. Their country must be graced, and their curiosity gratified with signs and wonders, or else, though the doctrine of Christ be sufficiently proved by miracles wrought elsewhere, they *will not believe*; like Thomas, they will yield to no method of conviction but what they shall prescribe. (2.) That whereas they had seen divers miracles which they could not gainsay the evidence of, but which sufficiently prove Christ a teacher come from God, and should now have applied themselves to him for instruction in his doctrine, which by its native excellency would have gently led them on in believing to a spiritual perfection; instead of this, they would go no further in believing, than they were *drawn* by signs and wonders. The spiritual power of the word did not affect them, did not attract them, but only the sensible power of miracles, which were for them who believe not, but *prophesying* for them that believe, 1 Cor. xiv. 22. Those that admire miracles only, and *despise prophesying*, rank themselves with unbelievers.

4. His continued importunity in his address, ver. 49. *Sir, come down ere my child die.* *Kuzis, Lord*, so it should be rendered. In this reply of his we have,

1. Something that was commendable; he took the reproof patiently, he spoke to Christ respectfully; though he was one of those that wore soft cloathing, yet could bear his reproof. It is none of the privileges of peerage to be above the reproofs of the word of Christ; but it is a sign of a good temper and disposition in men, especially in great men, when they can be told of their faults and not be angry. And as he did not take the reproof for an affront, so he did not take it for a denial, but still prosecuted his request, and continued to wrestle till he prevailed. Nay, he might argue thus, If Christ heal my soul, sure he will heal my son; if he cure my unbelief, he will cure his fever. This is the method Christ takes, first to work upon us, and then to work for us; and there is hope, if we find him entering upon this method.

2. Here is something that was blame-worthy; that was his infirmity; for, 1. He seems to take no notice of the reproof Christ gave him, faith nothing to it, either by way of confession or excuse, for he is so wholly taken up with concern about his child, that he can mind nothing else. Note, The sorrow of the world is a great prejudice to our profiting by the word of Christ: Inordinate care and grief are thorns that choke the good seed, see *Exod. vi. 9*. 2. He still discovered the weakness of his faith in the power of Christ. (1.) He must have Christ to come down, thinking else he could do the child no kindness. It is hard to persuade ourselves, that distance of time and place are no obstructions to the knowledge and power of our Lord Jesus; yet so it is, he sees afar off, for his eyes run to and fro; and he acts afar off, for his word, the word of his power, runs very swiftly. (2.) He believes Christ could heal a sick child, but not that he could raise a dead child, and therefore, *O come down, ere my child die*; as if then it would be too late; whereas Christ has the same power over death that he has over bodily senses. He forgot that Elijah and Elisha had raised dead children, and is Christ's power inferior to theirs? Observe what haste he is in; *Come down, ere my child die*; as if there were danger of Christ's slipping his time. *He that believeth doth not make haste*, but refers himself to Christ, Lord, what and when, and how thou pleasest.

Fifthly, The answer of peace which Christ gave to his request at last, ver. 50. *Go thy way, thy son liveth.* Christ here gives us an instance,

2. Of his power; that he not only could heal, but could heal with so much ease, without the trouble of a visit. Here is nothing said, nothing done, nothing ordered to be done, and yet the cure wrought; *thy son liveth*. The healing beams of the sun of righteousness dispense benign influences from one end of heaven to another, and *there is nothing hid from the heat thereof*. Though Christ is now in heaven, and his church on earth, he can send from above. This nobleman would have Christ come down and heal his son; Christ will heal his son and not come down. And thus the cure is the sooner wrought, the nobleman's mistakes rectified, and his faith confirmed; so that the thing was better done in Christ's way. When he denies what we ask, he gives what is much more to our advantage; we ask for ease, he gives patience. Observe, his power was exerted by his word. In saying, *thy son liveth*, he shewed that he has life in himself, and power to quicken whom he will. Christ's saying *thy son liveth*, makes him alive.

2. Of his pity; he observed the nobleman to be in pain about his son, and his natural affection discovered itself in that word, *ere my child*, my dear child die; and therefore Christ dropped the reproof, and gave him assurance of the recovery of his child; for he knows how a father pities his children.

Sixthly, The nobleman's belief of the word of Christ; he believed, and went away. Though Christ did not gratify him so far as to go down with him, he is satisfied with the method Christ took, and reckons he has gained his point. How quickly, how easily is that which is lacking in our faith, perfected by the word and power of Christ. Now he sees no sign or wonder, and yet believes the wonder done.

1. Christ said, *Thy son liveth*, and the man believed him; not only believed the omniscience of Christ, that he knew the child recovered, but the omnipotence of Christ, that the cure was effected by his word. He left him doing, yet when Christ said, *he lives*, like the father of the faithful, against hope he believed in hope, and staggered not through unbelief.

2. Christ said, *Go thy way*; and as an evidence of the sincerity of his faith, he went his way, and gave neither Christ nor himself any further disturbance. He did not press Christ to come down, did not say, if he do recover, yet a visit will be acceptable; no, he seems no farther solicitous, but, like Hannah, he goes his way, and his countenance is no more sad. As one entirely satisfied, he made no great haste home; did not hurry home that night, but returned leisurely, as one that was perfectly easy in his own mind.

Seventhly, The further confirmation of his faith, by comparing notes with his servants at his return.

1. His servants met him with the agreeable news of the child's recovery, ver. 51. Probably they met him not far from his own house, and knowing what their master's cares were, they were willing as soon as they could to make him easy. David's servants were loth to tell him when the child was dead. Christ said, *Thy son liveth*, and now the servants say the same, Good news will meet those that hope in God's word.

2. He enquired what hour the child began to recover, ver. 52. not as if he doubted the influence of Christ's word upon the child's recovery, but he was desirous to have his faith confirmed, that he might be able to satisfy any to whom he should relate it; for it was a material circumstance. Note, 1. It is good to furnish ourselves with all the corroborating proofs and evidences that may be to strengthen our faith in the word of Christ, that it may grow up to a full assurance; show me a token for good. 2. The diligent comparing of the works of Christ with his word, will be of great use to us for the confirming of our faith. That was the course this nobleman took; He enquired of the servants the hour when he began to amend; and they told him yesterday at the seventh hour, (at one o'clock in the afternoon, or, as some think this evangelist reckons, at seven o'clock at night) the fever left him; not only he began to amend, but he was perfectly well on a sudden; so the father knew that it was at the same hour, when Jesus said to him, *Thy son liveth*. As the word of God, well studied, will help us to understand his providences; so the providence of God, well observed will help us to understand his word, for God is every day fulfilling the scripture. Two things would help to confirm his faith. 1. That the child's recovery was sudden, and not gradual. They name the precise time to an hour, yesterday, not about, but at the seventh hour the fever left him; not it abated or began to decrease, but left him in an instant. The word of Christ did not work like physic, which must have time to operate and produce the effect, and perhaps cures by expectation only; no, with Christ it was dictum factum, he spake and it was done; not, he spake and it was set a doing. 2. That it was just at the same time that Christ spoke to him, At that very hour. The synchronisms and co-incidences of events, adds very much to the beauty and harmony of providence. Observe the time, and the thing itself will be more illustrious, for every thing is beautiful in its time; at the very time when it is promised, as Israel's deliverance, *Exod. xii. 41*. at the very time when it is prayed for, as Peter's deliverance, *Acts xii. 12*. In men's works distance of place is the delay of time, and the retarding of business; but it is not so in the works of Christ. The pardon, and peace, and comfort, and spiritual healing, which he speaks in heaven, is, if he pleases, at the same time effected and wrought in the souls of believers; and when these two come to be compared in the great day, Christ will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.

Eightly, The happy effect and issue of this. The bringing of the cure to the family brought salvation to it.

1. The nobleman himself believed. He had before believed the word of Christ with reference to this particular occasion, but now he believed in Christ as the Messiah promised, and became one of his disciples. Thus the particular experience of the power and efficacy of one word of Christ, may be a happy means to introduce and settle the whole authority of Christ's dominion in his soul. Christ has many ways of gaining the heart, and by the grant of a temporal mercy may make way for better things.

2. His whole house believed likewise. (1.) Because of the interest they all had in the miracle, which preserved the blossom and hopes of the family; this affected them all, and endeared Christ to them, and recommended him to their best thoughts. (2.) Because of the influence the master of the family had upon them all. A master of a family cannot give faith to those under his charge, nor force them to believe, but he may be instrumental to remove external prejudices which obstruct the operation of the evidence, and then the work is more than half done. Abraham was famous for this, *Gen. xviii. 19*, and Joshua, *chap. xxiv. 15*. This was a nobleman, and probably had a great household, but when he comes into Christ's schools he brings them all along with him. What a blessed change was herein this house, occasioned by the sickness of the child! this should reconcile us to afflictions, we know not what good may follow from them. Probably the conversion of this nobleman and his family at Capernaum, might invite Christ to come afterward and settle at Capernaum as his head-quarters in Galilee. When great men receive the gospel, they may be instrumental to bring it to the places where they live.

Lastly, Here is the evangelist's remark upon this cure, ver. 54. *This is the second miracle*; referring to chap. ii. 11. where the turning water into wine is said to be the first; that was soon after his first return out of Judea, this soon after his second. In Judea he had wrought many miracles, chap. iii. 2.—iv. 45. they had the first offer, but being driven thence he wrought miracles in Galilee: Somewhere or other Christ will find a welcome. People may if they please shut the sun out of their own houses, but cannot shut it out of the world. This is noted to be the second miracle, (1.) To remind us of the first wrought in the same place some months before. Fresh mercies should revive the remembrance of former mercies, as former mercies should encourage our hopes of further mercies. Christ keeps account of his favours, whether we do or do not. (2.) To let us know that this cure was before those many cures which the other evangelists mention to be wrought in Galilee, *Mat. iv. 23. Mark i. 34. Luke iv. 40*. Probably this cure, the patient being a person of quality, was the more talked of for that reason, and sent him crowds of patients; when this nobleman applied himself to Christ, multitudes followed. What abundance of good may great men do, if they be good men!

C H A P. V.

We have in the gospel a faithful record of all that Jesus began both to do, and to teach, *Acts i. 1*. These two are interwoven, because what he taught explained what he did, and what he did confirmed what he taught. Accordingly, we have in this chapter a miracle and a sermon. (1.) The miracle was the cure of an impotent man that had been diseased thirty eight years, with the circumstances of that cure, ver. 1—16. (2.) The sermon was Christ's vindication of himself before the Sanhedrin, when he was prosecuted as a criminal for healing the man on the sabbath-day: In which, (1.) He asserts his authority as Messiah, and Mediator between God and man, ver. 17—29. (2.) He proves it by the testimony of his Father, of John Baptist, of his miracles, and of the scriptures of the Old Testament, and condemns the Jews for their unbelief, ver. 30—47.

1. AFTER this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep-market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. 3. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. 4. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain

certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. 6. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that case*, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? 7. The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. 8. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. 9. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. 10. ¶ The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath-day: it is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed. 11. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. 12. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed and walk? 13. And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in *that* place. 14. Afterward Jesus finding him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. 15. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. 16. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath-day.

This miraculous cure is not recorded by any other of the evangelists, who confine themselves mostly to the miracles wrought in Galilee, but John relates those wrought at Jerusalem. Concerning this observe,

First, *The time when this cure was wrought*; it was at a *feast of the Jews*, i. e. the passover, for that was the most celebrated feast. Christ, though residing in Galilee, yet *went up to Jerusalem at the feast*, ver. 1.

1. Because it was an *ordinance of God*, which as a *subject* he would observe, being made under the law; though as a *son*, he might have pleaded an exemption. Thus he would teach us to attend religious assemblies, Heb. x. 25.

2. Because it was an *opportunity of good*; for, (1.) There were great numbers gathered together there at that time; it was a general rendezvous at least of all serious thinking people from all parts of the country, besides proselytes from other nations: And wisdom must *cry in the places of concourse*, Prov. i. 21. (2.) It was to be hoped that they were in a *good frame*, for they come together to *worship God*, and to spend their time in religious exercises. Now a mind *inclined to devotion*, and sequestering itself to the exercises of piety, *lies very open* to the farther discoveries of divine light and love, and to it Christ will be acceptable.

Secondly, *The place where this cure was wrought*; at the *pool of Bethesda*, which had a miraculous healing virtue in it, and is here particularly described, ver. 2, 3, 4.

1. Where it was situated; *at Jerusalem by the sheep-market*; ἐν τῇ ποσει καλῶν it might as well be rendered, the *sheep-cote*, where the sheep were kept; or the *sheep-gate*, which we read of, Neh. iii. 1. through which the sheep were brought, at the *sheep-market*, where they were sold. Some think it was near the temple, and if so, it yielded a melancholy, but profitable spectacle to those that went up to the temple to pray.

2. How it was called; it was a *pool*, (a pond, or bath) which is called in Hebrew, *Bethesda*, the *house of mercy*; for therein appeared much of the *mercy of God* to the sick and diseased. In a world of so much misery as this is, it is well there are some *Bethsedas*, houses of mercy; remedies against these maladies, that the scene is not all melancholy. An *alms-house*, so Dr. Hammond. Dr. Lightfoot's conjecture is, that this was the *upper pool*, Isa. vii. 3. and the *old pool*, Isa. xxii. 11. That it had been used for *washing* from ceremonial pollutions, for convenience of which, the porches were built to dress and undress in, but was lately become medicinal.

3. How it was fitted up; it had *five porches, cloisters, or piazzas*, or roofed walks, in which the sick lay. Thus the charity of men concurred with the mercy of God for the relief of the distressed. Nature has provided *remedies*, but men must provide *hospitals*.

4. How it was frequented with sick and cripples; ver. 3. *In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk*. How many are the afflictions of the afflicted in this world? How full of complaints are all places, and what multitudes of impotent folk? It may do us good to visit the hospitals sometimes, that we may take occasion from the calamities of others, to thank God for our comforts. The evangelist instances in three sorts of diseased people that lay here, *blind, halt, and withered*, or *sinew shrunk*, either in one particular part, as the man with the *withered hand*, or all over paralytic. These are mentioned, because being least able to help themselves into the water, they lay longest waiting in the *porches*. Those that were sick of those bodily diseases, took the pains to come *far*, and had the patience to wait *long* for a cure; any of us would have done the same, and we ought to do so; but O! that men were as wise for their souls, and as solicitous to get their spiritual diseases healed! We are all by nature *impotent folk* in spiritual things, *blind, halt, and withered*, but effectual provision is made for our cure, if we will but observe orders.

5. What virtue it had for the cure of these impotent folk; ver. 4. *An angel went down, and troubled the water*; and *whose first stepped in was made whole*. That this strange virtue in the pool was *natural*, or *artificial* rather, and was the effect of the washing of the sacrifices, which impregnated the water with I know not what healing virtue even for *blind* people; and that this angel was a *messenger*, a common person sent down to stir the water, is altogether groundless; there was a room in the temple on purpose to wash the sacrifices in. Expositors generally agree, that the virtue this pool had was supernatural. It is true, the Jewish writers, who do not use to be sparing in recounting the praises of Jerusalem, do none of them make the least mention of this *healing pool*; of which silence in this matter, perhaps this was the reason, that it was taken for a preface of the near approach of the Messiah, and therefore, they who denied him to be come, industriously concealed such an indication of his coming; so that this here is all the account we have of it. Observe,

1. *The preparation of the medicine by an angel*, who *went down into the pool*, and *stirred the water*. Angels are God's servants, and friends to mankind; and perhaps are more active in the removing of diseases, as evil angels in the inflicting of them, than we are aware of. Raphael, the apocryphal name of an angel, signifies, *medicinal*. Dr. Dri, God's phyic, or physician rather:

See what mean offices the holy angels condescend to for the good of men. If we would do the will of God as the angels do it, we must think nothing below us but sin. *The troubling of the water*, was the signal given of the descent of the angel; as the *going upon the tops of the mulberry trees* was to David, and then they must *bestir themselves*. The waters or the sanctuary are then *healing*; when they are put *in motion*. Ministers must *stir up the gift* that is in them: When they are cold and dull in their ministrations, the waters *settle*, and are not apt to *heal*. The angel descended to *stir the water*, not daily, perhaps not frequently, but *at a certain season*; some think, at the three solemn feasts, to grace those solemnities; or, *now and then*, as infinite Wisdom saw fit: God is a free agent in dispensing his favours.

2. *The operation of the medicine*; *Whoever first stepped in was made whole*. Here is, (1.) A miraculous extent of the virtue, as to the *diseases* cured; what disease soever it was, this water cured it. Natural and artificial baths are as *hurtful* in some cases, as they are useful in others, but this was a remedy for every malady, even for those that came from contrary causes. The power of miracles *succeeds*, where the power of nature *succumbs*. (2.) A miraculous limitation of the virtue, as to the *persons* cured; he that first stepped in had the benefit, i. e. he or they that stepped in *presently* were cured, not those that lingered and came in after. This teaches us to observe and improve our opportunities, and to *look about us*, that we slip not a season which may never return. The angel *stirred* the waters, but left the diseased to themselves to *get in*. God has put virtue into the scriptures and ordinances, for he would have healed us; but if we do not make a due improvement of them, it is our own fault, we *would not be healed*.

Now this is all the account we have of this *standing miracle*; it is uncertain when it began, and when it ceased. Some conjecture it began when Eliashib the high priest began the building of the wall about Jerusalem, and sanctified it with prayer; and that God testified his acceptance, by putting this virtue into the adjoining pool. Some think it began now lately at Christ's birth; nay, others at his baptism. Dr. Lightfoot finding in *Josephus Antiq.* lib. 15. cap. 7. mention of a great earthquake in the seventh year of Herod, thirty years before Christ's birth, supposed, that since there used to be earthquakes at the descent of angels, that then the angel first descended to stir this water. Some think it ceased with this miracle, others at Christ's death, however it is certain it had a gracious signification.

1. It was a *token of God's good will* to that people, and an indication, that though they had been long without prophets and miracles, yet God had not *cast them off*; though they were now an oppressed despised people, and many were ready to say, *Where are all the wonders that our fathers told us of?* God did hereby let them know, that he had still a kindness for the city of their solemnities.

We may from hence take occasion to acknowledge with thankfulness God's power and goodness in the mineral waters, that contribute so much to the health of mankind, for God *made the fountains of water*, Rev. xiv. 7.

2. It was a type of the Messiah, who is the *fountain opened*; and was intended to raise people's expectations of him, who is the *sun of righteousness*, that ariseth with *healing under his wings*. These waters had formerly been used for purifying, now for healing, to signify both the *cleansing* and *curing* diseases. The waters of Siloam, which filled this pool, signified the kingdom of David, and of Christ the Son of David, *Isa.* viii. 6. fitly therefore have they now this *sovereign* virtue put into them. The laver of regeneration is to us, as Bethesda's pool, healing our spiritual diseases; not at certain seasons, but at all times: *Whoever will, let him come*.

Thirdly, *The patient on whom this cure was wrought*, ver. 5. One that had been *infirm thirty-eight years*.

1. His *disease was grievous*: he had an *infirmity*, a weakness; he had lost the use of his limbs, at least on one side, as is usual in palsies. It is sad to have the body so disabled, that instead of being the soul's instrument, it is become, even in the affairs of this life, its burden. What reason have we to thank God for bodily strength, and to use it for him, and pity those who are *his prisoners*!

2. *The duration of it was tedious, thirty-eight years*; he was lame longer than most live. Many are so long disabled for the offices of life, that, as the psalmist complains, they seem to be *made in vain*; for suffering, not for service; born to be always dying. Shall we complain of our wearisome night or one ill fit, who perhaps for many years have scarce known what it has been to be a day sick, when many others, better than we, have scarce known what it has been to be a day well. Mr. Baxter's note on this passage is very affecting: "How great a mercy was it, to live thirty-eight years under God's wholesome discipline. O my God (saith he) I thank thee for the like discipline of fifty-eight years; how safe a life is this, in comparison of full prosperity and pleasure!"

Fourthly, *The cure and circumstances of it briefly related*, ver. 6, 7, 8, 9.

1. *Jesus saw him lie*. Observe, When Christ came up to Jerusalem, he visited not the palaces but the hospitals, which is an instance of his humility and condescension, and tender compassion; and an *indication* of his great design in coming into the world, which was to *seek and save the sick and wounded*. There was a great multitude of poor cripples here at Bethesda, but Christ fastened his eye upon this one, and singled him out from the rest, because he was *senior* of the house, and in a more deplorable condition than any of the rest; and Christ delights to help the helpless; and hath mercy on *whom he will have mercy*. Perhaps his companions in tribulation insulted over him, because he had been often disappointed of a cure, therefore Christ took him for his patient: it is his honour to side with the weakest, and bear up those whom he sees *run down*.

2. He *knew*, and considered *how long he had lain* in this condition. Those that have been long in affliction, may comfort themselves with this, that God keeps account *how long*, and knows our frame.

3. He asked him, *Wilt thou be made whole?* a strange question to be asked one that had been so long ill. Some indeed would not be made whole, because their sores serve them to beg by, and serve them for an excuse for idleness; but this poor man was as unable to *go a begging*, as to *work*, yet Christ put it to him, (1.) To *express* his own pity and concern for him. Christ is tenderly inquisitive concerning the desires of those that are in affliction, and is willing to know *what is their petition*; what shall I do for you? (2.) To try him whether he would be *beholden* to him for a cure, whom the great people were so prejudiced against, and sought so prejudice others. (3.) To teach him to value the mercy, and to excite in him desires after it. In spiritual cases, people are not willing to be cured of their sins, are loth to part with them. If this point therefore were but gained; if people were willing to be *made whole*, the work were half done, for Christ is willing to heal, if we be but willing to be healed. *Mat.* viii. 3.

4. The poor impotent man takes this occasion to renew his complaint, and to set forth the misery of his case, which makes his cure the more illustrious, ver. 7. *Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool*. He seems to take Christ's question as an imputation of carelessness and neglect; if thou hadst had a mind to be healed, thou wouldst have looked better to thy hits, and have got into the healing waters long before now; no, master, saith the

poor

poor man, it is not for want of a *good will*, but of a *good friend*, that I am unhealed: I have done what I could to help myself, but in vain, for no one else will help me.

(1.) He doth not think of any other way of being cured, but by these waters, and dries no other friendship, but to be helped into them; therefore when Christ cured him, his imagination or expectation could not contribute to it, for he thought of no such thing.

(2.) He complains for want of friends to help him in; *I have no man*, no friend to do me that kindness. One would think, some of those that had been themselves healed, should have lent him a hand; but it is common for the poor to be destitute of friends: *No man careth for their soul*. To the sick and impotent, it is as true a piece of charity to work for them, as to relieve them; and thus the poor are capable of being charitable to one another, and ought to be so, though we seldom find that they are so; I speak it to their shame.

(3.) He bewails his infelicity, that very often when he was coming, another stepped in before him: But a step between him and a cure, and yet he continues impotent. None had the charity to say, your case is worse than mine, do you go in now, and I will stay till the next time; for there is no getting over the old maxim, *Every one for himself*. Having been so often balked, he begins to despair, and now is Christ's time to come in to his relief; he likes to help in desperate cases. Observe, How mildly this man speaks of the unkindness of those about him, without any peevish reflections; as we should be thankful for the least kindness, so we should be patient under the greatest contempts; and let our resentments be *never so just*, yet our expressions should *ever be calm*. And observe further to his praise, that though he had waited so long in vain, yet still he continued lying by the pool side, hoping that some time or other help would come. *Hab. iii. 2*.

5. Our Lord Jesus hereupon cures him with a word speaking, though he neither asked it, nor thought of it.

Here is, 1. The word he said, *ver. 8. Rise, take up thy bed*.

1. He is bidden to *rise and walk*; a strange command to be given to an impotent man, that had been long disabled; but this divine word was to be the vehicle of a divine power; it was a command to the disease to be gone, to nature to be strong, but it is expressed as a command to him to *bestir himself*. He must *rise and walk*, i.e. attempt to do it, and in the *effort* he should receive strength to do it. The conversion of a sinner is the cure of a chronic disease; this is ordinarily done by the word, a word of command, *arise and walk*; *turn and live*; *make ye a new heart*; which no more supposes a power in us to do it, without the grace of God, *distinguishing grace*, than this supposed such a power in the impotent man. But if he had not attempted to help himself, he had not been cured, and he must have borne the blame; yet it doth not therefore follow, that when he did rise and walk, it was by his own strength; no, it was by the power of Christ, and he must have all the glory. Observe, Christ did not bid him rise and go into the waters, but *rise and walk*. Christ did that for us which the law could not do, and set that aside.

2. He is bidden to *take up his bed*. (1.) To make it appear that it was a *perfect cure*, and purely miraculous, for he did not recover strength by degrees, from the extremity of weakness and impotency, he suddenly stepped into the highest degree of bodily strength; so that he was able to carry as great a load as any porter, that had been as long used to it as he had been disabled: He, who this minute was not able to turn him in his bed, the next minute was able to carry his bed. The man sick of the palsy, *Mat. ix. 6*. was bidden to go to his house, but probably this man had no house to go to, the hospital was his home; therefore he is bidden to *rise and walk*. (2.) It was to *proclaim the cure*, and make it public; for being the sabbath-day, whoever carried a burden through the streets, made himself very remarkable, and every one would enquire what was the meaning of it; thereby the notice of the miracle would spread to the honour of God. (3.) Christ would thus witness against the tradition of the elders, which had stretched the law of the sabbath beyond its intention; and would likewise shew that he was *Lord of the sabbath*, and had power to make what alterations he pleased about it, and to over-rule the law. Joshua, and the host of Israel, marched about Jericho on the sabbath-day, when God commanded them; so did this man carry his bed in obedience to a command. The case may be such, that it may become a work of *necessity or mercy*, to carry a bed on the sabbath-day; but here it was more, it was a work of *piety*, being designed purely for the glory of God. (4.) He would hereby try the faith and obedience of his patient. By carrying his bed publicly, he exposed himself to the censure of the ecclesiastical court, and was liable at least to be *scourged in the synagogue*. Now, will he run the venture of that in obedience to Christ? Yes, he will. Those that have been healed by Christ's word, should be ruled by his word, whatever it cost them.

2. The efficacy of this word, *ver. 9*. a divine power went along with it, and immediately he was *made whole*; *took up his bed and walked*. (1.) He felt the power of Christ's word healing him, *immediately he was made whole*. What a joyful surprise this was to the poor cripple, to find himself all of a sudden so easy, so strong, so able to help himself; what a new world was he in an instant! Nothing is too hard for Christ to do. (2.) He obeyed the power of Christ's word commanding him. He *took up his bed and walked*, and did not care who blamed him, or threatened him for it. The proof of our spiritual cure, is our rising and walking. Hath Christ healed our spiritual diseases, let us go whithersoever he sends us, and *take up whatever he is pleased to lay upon us*; and *walk before him*.

Lastly, What came of the poor man after he was cured. We are here told.

1. What passed between him and the Jews, who saw him carry his bed on the sabbath-day; for on that day this cure was wrought, and it was the sabbath that fell within the passover, and therefore a *high day*, *John xix. 31*. Christ's work was such, as that he needed not make any difference between sabbath-days and other days, for he was always about his Father's business; but he wrought many remarkable cures on that day, perhaps to encourage his church to expect those spiritual favours from him, in their observance of the Christian sabbath, which was typified by his miraculous cures. Now here.

1. The Jews quarrel with the man for carrying his bed on the sabbath-day, telling him it was *not lawful*, *ver. 10*. it doth not appear whether they were magistrates who had power to punish him, or common people who could only *inform* against him; but thus far was commendable, that while they knew not by *what authority* he did it, they were jealous for the honour of the sabbath, and could not unconcernedly see it profaned, like Nehemiah, *chap. xiii. 17*.

2. The man justifies himself in what he did, by a warrant that would bear him out, *ver. 11*. I do not do it in contempt of the law and the sabbath, but in obedience to one, who, by *making me whole*, hath given an undeniable proof that he is greater than either. He that could work such a miracle, as to *make me whole*, no doubt might give me such a command, as to *carry my bed*; he that could over-rule the powers of nature, no doubt might over-rule a positive law, especially in an instance not of the essence of the law: He that was so kind as to make me whole, would not be so un-

kind as to bid me do what is sinful. Christ, by curing another paralytic, proved his power to *forgive sin*, here to *give law*; if his pardons are valid, his edicts are so, and his miracles prove both.

3. The Jews enquire further, who it was that gave him this warrant, *ver. 12. What man is that?* Observe, How industriously they *over-looked* that which might be a ground of their faith in Christ. They enquire not, no, not for curiosity, who is that that *made thee whole*? While they industriously caught at that which might be a ground of reflection upon Christ; *What man is that which laid un-o thee, take up thy bed?* They would fain subpoena the patient to be witness against his physician, and to be his betrayer. In their question, observe, (1.) They resolve to look upon Christ as a *mere man*: *What man is that?* For though he gave ever such convincing proofs of it, they were resolved they would never own him to be the Son of God. (2.) They resolve to look upon him as an *ill man*, and take it for granted that he who bid this man carry his bed, whatever divine commission he might produce, was certainly a delinquent, and as such they resolve to prosecute him. *What man is that who durst give such orders?*

4. The poor man was unable to give them any account of him, *ver. 13. He wist not who he was*.

1. Christ was *unknown* to him when he healed him. Probably he had heard of the name of Jesus, but had never seen him, and therefore could not tell that this was he. Note, Christ doth many a good turn for those that know him not, *Isa. xlv. 4, 5*. He enlightens, strengthens, quickens, comforts us, and we *wist not who he is*; nor are aware how much we receive daily by his mediation. This man being unacquainted with Christ, could not actually believe in him for a cure; but Christ knew the dispositions of his soul, and suited his favours to them, as to the blind man in a like case, *John ix. 36*. Our covenant and communion with God takes rise not so much from our knowledge of him, as from his knowledge of us. We *know God*, or rather, are *known of him*, *Gal. iv. 9*.

2. For the present he *kept himself unknown*; for as soon as he had wrought the cure, he *conveyed himself away*, he *made himself unknown*, so some read it; *a multitude being in that place*. This is mentioned to shew, either, (1.) How Christ conveyed himself away, by retiring into the crowd, so as not to be distinguished from a common person: He that was the chief of ten thousand, often made himself one of the throng. It is sometimes the lot of those who have by their services signalized themselves, to be levelled with the multitude and overlooked. Or, (2.) Why he conveyed himself away; because there was a *multitude* there, and he industriously avoided both the *applause* of those who would admire the miracle, and *cry that up*, and the censure of those who would censure him as a sabbath-breaker, and *run him down*. Those that are active for God in their generation, must expect to pass by *evil report* and *good report*; and it is wisdom, as much as may be, to keep out of the hearing of both; lest by the one we be *exalted*, and by the other *depressed* above measure. Christ left the miracle to commend itself, and the man on whom it was wrought to justify it.

2. What passed between him and our Lord Jesus at their next interview, *ver. 14*. Observe here,

1. Where Christ found him: *in the temple*, the place of worship, public worship; in our attendance on public worship we may expect to meet with Christ, and improve our acquaintance with him. Observe, (1.) Christ *went to the temple*; though he had many enemies, yet he appeared in public, because there he bore his testimony to divine institutions, and had opportunity of doing good. (2.) The man that was cured *went to the temple*, there Christ found him the same day, as it should seem, that he was healed: thither he straightway went. (1.) Because he had by his infirmity been so long *detained thence*; perhaps he had not been there of thirty-eight years, and therefore as soon as ever the embargo is taken off, his first visit shall be to the temple, as Hezekiah intimates his shall be, *Isa. xxxviii. 22. What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord?* (2.) Because he had by his recovery, a good errand thither; he went up to the temple to return thanks to God for his recovery. When God has at any time restored us our health, we ought to attend him with solemn praises, *Psal. cxvi. 18, 19*, and the sooner the better, while the sense of the mercy is fresh. (3.) Because he had by *carrying his bed*, seemed to put a contempt upon the sabbath, he would thus shew that he had an honour for it, and made conscience of sabbath sanctification; in that on which the chief stress of it is laid, which is the *public worship of God*: Works of necessity and mercy are allowed, but when they are over, we must go to the temple.

2. What he had said to him. When Christ has cured us, he has not done with us, he now applies himself to the healing of his soul, and this by the word too.

1. He gives him a memorandum of his cure, *Behold, thou art made whole*; he found himself made whole, yet Christ calls his attention to it. *Behold, consider it seriously*, how sudden, how strange, how cheap, how easy the cure was; *admire it*, behold and wonder; *remember it*, let the impressions of it abide, and never be lost, *Isa. xxxviii. 9*.

2. He gives him a caution against sin; in consideration hereof, *Being made whole, sin no more*. This implies, that his disease was the punishment of sin; whether of some remarkable flagrant sin, or only of sin in general, we cannot tell; but we know that sin is the procuring cause of sickness, *Psal. cvii. 17, 19*. Some observe that Christ did not make mention of sin to any of his patients, but only to this *impotent* man, and to one other who was in like manner diseased, *Mark ii. 5*. While those chronic diseases lasted, they prevented the outward acts of many sins, and therefore now the disability was removed they had the more need to be watchful. Christ intimates to him, that those who are *made whole*, that are eased of the present sensible punishment of sin, are in danger of *returning to sin*, when the terror and restraint of that is over, unless divine grace dry up the fountain: When the trouble, which only dammed up the current, is over, the waters will return to their old course; and therefore there is need of great watchfulness, lest after healing mercy we return again to folly. The *misery* we were *made whole from*, warns us to sin no more, having left the smart of sin; the *mercy* we were *made whole by*, is an engagement upon us not to offend him who healed us. This is the voice of every providence, *Go, and sin no more*. This man began his new life very hopefully, *in the temple*, yet Christ saw it necessary to give him this caution; for it is common for people when they are sick, to *promise much*, when newly recovered, to *perform something*, but after a while to forget all.

3. He gives him warning of his danger, in case he should return to his former sinful course, *lest a worse thing come to thee*: Christ, who knows all men's hearts, knew that he was one of those that must be *frightened* from sin. Thirty-eight years' lameness, one would think, was a thing ill enough, yet there is something *worse* that will come to him, if he relapse into sin after God has given him such a deliverance as this, *Ecc. iv. 13, 14*. The hospital where he lay was a melancholy place, but hell much more so: The doom of apostates is a worse thing than thirty-eight years' lameness.

Now after this interview between Christ and his patient, observe in the two following verses,

1. The notice which the poor simple man gave to the Jews concerning Christ, *ver. 15*. he told them it was Jesus that had made him whole. We have

have reason to think he intended this for the honour of Christ, and the benefit of the Jews, little thinking that he that had so much power and goodness could have any enemies; but those that wish well to Christ's kingdom, must have the *wisdom of the serpent*, lest they do more hurt than good with their zeal, and not cast pearls before swine.

2. The rage and enmity of the Jews against him. *Therefore did the rulers of the Jews persecute Jesus.* See, (1.) How absurd and unreasonable their enmity to Christ was. *Therefore*, because he had made a poor sick man well, and so eased the public charge, upon which it is likely he had subsisted; *therefore* they persecuted him, because he did good to Israel. (2.) How bloody and cruel it was; they *sought to slay him*; nothing less than his blood, his life, would satisfy them. (3.) How it was varnished over with a colour of zeal for the honour of the sabbath, for this was the pretended crime, *Because he had done these things on the sabbath-day*; as if that circumstance were enough to vitiate the best and most divine actions, and to render him obnoxious, whose deeds were otherwise most meritorious. These hypocrites often cover their real enmity against the power of godliness, with a pretended zeal for the form of it.

17. ¶ But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. 18. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. 19. Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. 20. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth, and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. 21. For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them: even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. 22. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: 23. That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. 24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. 25. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. 26. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; 27. And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. 28. Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice. 29. And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. 30. I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

We have here Christ's discourse upon occasion of his being accused as a sabbath-breaker; and it seems to be his vindication of himself before the Sanhedrin, when he was arraigned before them; whether on the same day, or two or three days after, doth not appear; probably the same day. Observe,

1. The doctrine laid down, by which he justified what he did on the sabbath-day, *ver. 17. He answered them.* This supposeth that he had something laid to his charge; or, what they suggested one to another, when they sought to slay him, *ver. 16. He knew*, and gave this reply to, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.* At other times, in answer to the like charge, he had pleaded the example of David, eating the shew-bread, of the priests slaying the sacrifices, and of the people's watering their cattle on the sabbath-day; but here he goes higher, and alledgeth the example of his Father and his divine authority; waving all other pleas, he insists upon that which was *infallum omnium*, and abides by it, which he had mentioned, *Matt. xii. 8. The Son of man is Lord, even of the sabbath-day*; but he here enlarges on it.

1. He pleads that he was the *Son of God*, plainly intimated in his calling *God his Father*; and if so, his Holiness was unquestionable, and his sovereignty uncontested, and he might make what alterations he pleased of the divine law. *Surely they will reverence the Son, the heir of all things.*

2. That he was a worker together with God.

(1.) *My Father worketh hitherto.* The example of God's resting on the seventh day from all his work, is, in the fourth commandment, made the ground of our observing it as a sabbath or day of rest. Now God rested only from such work as he had done the six days before, otherwise he *worketh hitherto*; he is every day working, sabbath-days and week-days; upholding and governing all the creatures, and concurring by his common providence to all the motions and operations of nature, to his own glory; therefore, when we are appointed to rest on the sabbath-day, yet we are not restrained from doing that which has a direct tendency to the glory of God; as the man's carrying his bed had.

(2.) *I work*; not only therefore I may work, like him, in doing good on sabbath-days as well as other days, but I also *work with him.* As God created all things by Christ, so he supports and governs all by him, *Heb. i. 3.* This sets what he doth above all exception; he that is so great a worker, must needs be an uncontrollable governor; he that doth all is Lord of all, and therefore Lord of the Sabbath; which particular branch of his authority he would now assert, because he was shortly to shew it further, in the change of the day from the seventh to the first.

2. The offence that was taken at his doctrine, *ver. 18. The Jews sought the more to kill him.* His defence was made his offence, as if by justifying himself he had made ill worse. Note, Those that will not be enlightened by the word of Christ, will be enraged and exasperated by it; and nothing

more vexeth the enemies of Christ, than his asserting his authority, see *Psal. ii. 3, 4, 5.*

(1.) Because he had broken the sabbath: for let him say what he would in his own justification, they are resolved, right or wrong, to find him guilty of sabbath-breaking. When malice and envy sit upon the bench, reason and justice may even be silent at the bar, for whatever they can say will undoubtedly be over-ruled.

(2.) Not only so, but he said also, *That God was his Father.* Now they pretend a jealousy for God's honour, as before for the sabbath-day, and charge Christ with it as a heinous crime, that he made himself equal with God; and a heinous crime it had been, if he had not really been so. It was the sin of Lucifer, *I will be like the most high.* Now,

(1.) This was justly inferred from what he said; that he was the *Son of God*, and that God was his Father, *πάτερ ἰδιον, his own Father*: his so as he was no one's else. He had said that he had worked with his Father, by the same authority and power, and hereby he made himself equal with God. *Ecc. intelligunt Judæi, quod non intelligunt Ariani.*

(2.) Yet it was unjustly imputed to him as an offence, that he equalled himself with God, for he was, and is God equal with the Father, *Phil. ii. 6.* and therefore Christ, in answer to this charge, doth not except against the insinuation as strained or forced, but makes out his claim, and proves that he is equal with God in power and glory.

3. Christ's discourse upon this occasion, which continues without interruption to the end of the chapter; in these verses he explains and afterwards confirms his commission, as mediator, and plenipotentiary in the treaty between God and man. And as the honours he is hereby intitled to, are such as it is not fit for any creature to receive, so the work he is hereby intrusted with is such as it is not possible for any creature to go through with, and therefore he is God equal with the Father.

1. In general. He is one with the Father, in all he doth as mediator, and there was a perfect good understanding between them in the whole matter. It is ushered in with a solemn preface, *ver. 19. Verily, verily, I say unto you; I the amen, the amen say it.* This speaks what is said to be, (1.) Very awful and great, and such as command the most serious attention. (2.) Very sure, and such as commands an unfeigned assent. (3.) It intimates, that they are matters purely of divine relation; things which Christ has told us, and which we could not otherwise have come to the knowledge of. Two things he saith in general, concerning the Son's oneness with the Father in working.

1. That the Son conforms to the Father; *ver. 19. The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do, for these things doth the Son.* The Lord Jesus as Mediator is, (1.) Obedient to his Father's will: so entirely obedient, that he *can do nothing of himself*, in the same sense as it is said *God cannot lie, cannot deny himself*, which speaks the perfection of his truth, not any imperfection in his strength; so here Christ was so entirely devoted to his Father's will that it was impossible for him in any thing to act separately.

(2.) He is obedient of his Father's counsels: he can, he will do nothing but what he sees the Father do. No man can find out the work of God, but the only begotten Son, who lay in his bosom, sees what he doth, and is intimately acquainted with his purposes, and has the plan of them even before him. What he did as Mediator throughout his whole undertaking, was the exact transcript or counterpart of what the Father did; that is, what he designed when he formed the plan of our redemption in his eternal counsels, and settled those measures in every thing which never could be broke, nor never need to be altered; it was the copy of that great original: it was Christ's faithfulness as it was Moses's that he did all according to the pattern shewed him in the mount. This is expressed in the present tense, what he sees the Father do, for the same reason, that when he was here upon earth, it was said he is in heaven, *Joh. iii. 13.* and is in the bosom of the Father, *Joh. i. 18.* as he was even then by his divine nature present in heaven, so the things done in heaven were present to his knowledge. What the Father did in his counsels, the Son had ever in his view, and still he had his eye upon it, as David in Spirit spake of him, *I have set the Lord always before me*, *Psal. xvi. 8.* (3.) Yet he is equal with the Father in working, for what things soever the Father doth, these also doth the Son likewise: he did the same things, not such things, but *ταὐτά, the same things*; and he did them in the same manner, *ὁμοίως, likewise* with the same authority and liberty, and wisdom, the same energy and efficacy; Doth the Father enact, repeal, and alter positive laws? Doth he over-rule the course of nature, know men's hearts? So doth the Son. The power of the Mediator is a divine power.

2. That the Father communicates to the Son, *ver. 20. Observe, 1. The inducement to it, the Father loveth the Son*: he declared, *This is my beloved Son.* He had not only a good will to the undertaking, but an infinite complacency in the undertaker. Christ was now hated of men, one whom the nation abhorred, *Isa. xlix. 7.* but he comforted himself with this, that his Father loved him. 2. The instances of it. He sheweth it,

1. In what he doth communicate to him; *he sheweth him all things that himself doth.* The Father's measures in making and ruling the world are shewed to the Son, that he may take the same measures in framing and governing the church, which work was to be a duplicate, of the work of creation and providence, and is therefore called *the world to come*. He sheweth him all things *αὐτὰ ὅσα ἐγὼ ποιῶ, which he doth*, i. e. which the Son doth, so it might be entrusted; all that the Son doth is by direction from the Father: he shews him,

2. In what he will communicate; he will shew him, i. e. will appoint and direct him to do greater works than these. (1.) Works of greater power than the curing of the impotent man, for he should raise the dead, and should himself rise from the dead. By the power of nature, with the use of means, a diseased may possibly in time be cured, but nature can never, by the use of any means, in any time raise the dead. (2.) Works of greater authority than warranting the man to carry his bed on the sabbath-day. They thought that a daring attempt, but what was that to his abrogating the whole ceremonial law, and instituting new ordinances which he would shortly do; that ye may marvel. Now they looked upon his works with contempt and indignation, but he will shortly do that which they will look upon him with amazement, *Luke vii. 16.* Many are brought to marvel at Christ's works, whereby he has the honour of them that are not brought to believe, by which they would have the benefit of them.

2. In particular; he proves his equality with the Father, by instancing in some of those works which he doth, that are the peculiar works of God. This is enlarged upon, *ver. 21—30.* (1.) He doth, and shall do that which is the peculiar work of God's almighty power, *raising the dead*, and *giving life*, *ver. 21—25, 26—28.* (2.) He doth and shall do that which is the peculiar work of God's sovereign dominion and jurisdiction, *judging*, and *executing judgment*, *ver. 22, 23, 24, 27.* These two are interwoven, as being nearly connected; and what is said once, is repeated and inculcated; put both together and they will prove that Christ said not amiss when he made himself equal with God.

First, Observe, what is here said concerning the Mediator's power to raise the dead and give life. See,

1. His authority to do it, *ver. 21. At the Father raiseth up the dead, so will he quicken whom he will.*

(1.) It is God's prerogative to raise the dead and give life, even his who first *breathed* into man the *breath of life*, and to make him a *living soul*; see *Gen. ii. 7. 1 Sam. ii. 6. Psal. lxxviii. 20. Rom. iv. 17.* This God had done to the prophets Elisha, and Eliseus, and it was a confirmation of their mission. A resurrection from the dead never lay in the common road of nature, nor ever fell within the thought of those that studied only the compass of nature's power, one of whose received axioms, was point-blank against it; *a privatione ad habitum non datur regressus*, it was therefore ridiculed at Athens as an *absurd thing*, *Acts xvii. 32.* It is purely the work of a divine power, and the knowledge of it purely by divine revelation. This the Jews would own.

(2.) The mediator is invested with this prerogative; *He quickeneth whom he will*; raise to whom he will to life, and when he pleases. He doth not enliven things by natural necessity, as the sun doth, whose beams revive of course, but he acts as a free agent, has the dispensing of his power in his own hand, and is never either *constrained* or *restrained*, in the use of it. As he has the power, so he has the wisdom and sovereignty of a God: has the *keys of the grave and of death*, *Rev. i. 18.* not as a servant, to open and shut as he is bidden, for he has it as the *key of David*, which he is master of, *Rev. iii. 7.* An absolute prince is described by this, *Dan. v. 19.* whom he would he slew or kept alive; it is true of Christ without an hyperbole.

2. His ability to do it. Therefore he has power to quicken whom he will as the Father doth, because *he hath life in himself as the Father has*, *ver. 26.*

(1.) It is certain the Father *has life in himself*. Not only he is a *self-existent* being, who doth not derive from or depend upon any other, *Exod. iii. 14.* but he is a sovereign giver of life; he has the disposal of life in himself, and of all good, for *life* sometimes signifies; it is all derived from him, and dependent on him; he is to his creatures the fountain of life, and all good; author of their being and well being; the living God, and the God of all living.

(2.) It is as certain, that he hath given to the Son to have life in himself. As the Father is the original of all natural life and good, being the great Creator, so the Son, as Redeemer, is the original of all spiritual life and good; is that to the church, that the Father is to the world; see *1 Cor. viii. 6. Col. i. 19.* The kingdom of grace, and all the life in that kingdom, is as fully and absolutely in the hand of the Redeemer, as the kingdom of providence is in the hand of the Creator; and as God, who gives being to all things, has his being of himself, so Christ, who gives life, raised himself to life by his own power, *John x. 18.*

3. His acting according to this authority and ability. Having life in himself, and being authorized to quicken whom he will, by virtue hereof there are accordingly two resurrections performed by his powerful word; both of which are here spoken of.

1. A resurrection that *now is*, *ver. 29.* a resurrection from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, by the power of Christ's grace. *The hour is coming, and now is.* It is a resurrection begun already, and further to be carried on; *When the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God.* This is plainly distinguished from that, *ver. 28.* which speaks of the resurrection at the end of time. This saith nothing, as that doth of the dead in their graves, and of all of them, and their coming forth. Now, (1.) Some think this was fulfilled in those whom he miraculously raised to life, Jairus's daughter, the widow's son, and Lazarus; and it is observable, that all that Christ raised, were spoken to as *dansel, arise; young man, arise; Lazarus, come forth*; whereas, those raised under the Old Testament, were raised, not by a word, but other applications, *1 Kings xvii. 21. 2 Kings iv. 34.—xii. 21.* Some understand it of those saints that rest with Christ, but we do not read of the voice of the Son of God calling them. But, (2.) I rather understand it of the power of the doctrine of Christ, for the recovering and quickening of those that were *dead in trespasses and sin*, *Eph. i. 5, 6.* The hour was coming, when dead souls should be made alive by the preaching of the gospel, and a spirit of life from God accompanying it; nay, it then was while Christ was upon earth. It may refer especially to the calling of the Gentiles, which is said to be as life from the dead, and, I think, was prefigured by Ezekiel's vision, *chap. xxxvii. 1.* and foretold, *Isa. xxvi. 19. The dead man shall live.* But it is to be applied to all the wonderful success of the gospel, both among Jews and Gentiles; an hour which still is, and is still coming, till all the elect be effectually called. Note, 1. Sinners are spiritually dead, destitute of spiritual life, sense, strength and motion, dead to God, miserable, but neither sensible of their misery, nor able to help themselves out of it, 2. The conversion of a soul to God is its resurrection from death to life; that it begins to live, when it begins to live to God, to breathe after him, and move towards him. 3. It is by the voice of the Son of God that souls are raised to spiritual life; it is wrought by his power, and that power conveyed and communicated by his word; the dead shall hear, shall be made to hear, to understand, receive, and believe the voice of the Son of God; to hear it as his voice, then the Spirit by it gives life, otherwise the letter kills. 4. The voice of Christ must be heard by us, that we may live by it. They that hear and attend to what they hear shall live. *Hear, and your soul shall live*, *1 Th. iv. 3.*

2. A resurrection yet to come; this is spoken of, *ver. 28, 29.* introduced with, *marvel not at this*, which I have said of the first resurrection, do not reject it as incredible and absurd, for at the end of time you shall all see a more sensible and amazing proof of the power and authority of the Son of man. As his own resurrection was reserved to be the final and concluding proof of his personal commission, so the resurrection of all men is reserved to be a like proof of his commission to be executed by his Spirit. Now observe here,

1. When the resurrection shall be; *the hour is coming*; it is fixed to an hour, so very punctual is this great appointment. The judgment is not adjourned, *quædā* to some time, not yet pitched upon; no, he hath appointed a day. *The hour is coming.* (1.) It is not yet come, it is not the hour spoken of at *ver. 25* that is coming and now is. Those erred dangerously who said *a resurrection was passed already.* 2 Tim. ii. 18. But, (2.) It will certainly come, it is coming on, nearer every day than other; it is at the door. How far off it is we know not, but we know that it is infallibly designed and unalterably determined.

2. Who shall be raised; *all that are in the graves*, all that have died from the beginning of time, and all that shall die to the end of time. It was said, *Dan. xii. 2.* many shall arise; Christ here tells us those many shall be all. All must appear before the Judge, and therefore all must be raised; every person, and the whole of every person; every soul shall return to its body, and every bone to its base. The grave is the prison of dead bodies where they are detained; their furnace where they are consumed, *(Job. xxiv. 19.)* yet in prospect of their resurrection we may call it their *bed*, where they sleep to be awakened again; their treasury, where they are laid up to be used again. Those that are not put into graves yet shall arise; but because most are put into graves, Christ useth this expression, *all that are in the graves.* The Jews used the word *shol* for the grave, which signifies the state of the dead; all that are in that state shall hear.

3. How they shall be raised. Two things are here told us,

1. The efficient of his resurrection; they shall hear his voice, i. e. he shall cause them to hear it, as Lazarus was made to hear that word, *come forth*; a divine power shall go along with the voice to put life into them, and enable them to obey it. When Christ rose, there was no voice heard, nor a word spoken, because he rose by his own power; but at the resurrection of the children of men we find three voices spoken of, *1 Thess. iv. 26.* The Lord shall descend with a shout, the shout of a king, with the voice of the archangel; either Christ himself, the prince of the angels, or the commander in chief under him, of the heavenly hosts; and with the trumpet of God: The soldier's trumpet sounding the alarm of war, the judge's trumpet publishing the summons to the court.

2. The effect of it; they shall come forth out of their graves, as prisoners out of their prison-house; they shall arise out of the dust, and shake themselves from it; see *Isa. liii. 1, 2, 11.* But this is not all, they shall appear before Christ's tribunal; shall come forth as those that are to be tried; come forth to the bar, publicly to receive their doom.

4. To what shall they be raised; to a different state of happiness or misery, according to their different character; to a state of retribution, according to what they did in the state of probation.

1. They that have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of life; they shall live again to live for ever. Note, 1. Whatever name men are called by, or whatever plausible profession they make, it will be well in the great day with those only that have done good, have done that which is pleasing to God and profitable to others. The resurrection of the body will be a resurrection of life to all those, and those only, that have been sincere and constant in doing good. They shall not only be publicly acquitted, as a pardoned criminal we say has his life, but they shall be admitted into the presence of God, and that is life, it is better than life; they shall be attended with comforts in perfection. To live is to be happy, and they shall be advanced above the fear of death; that is life indeed, in which mortality is for ever swallowed up.

2. They that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation; they shall live again to be for ever dying. The Pharisees thought the resurrection pertained only to the just, but Christ here rectifies that mistake. Note, (1.) Evil doers, whatever they pretend, will be treated in the day of judgment as evil men. 2. The resurrection will be to evil doers, that did not by repentance undo what they had done amiss, a resurrection of damnation. Then shall come forth to be publicly convicted of rebellion against God, and publicly condemned to everlasting punishment; to be sentenced to it, and immediately sent to it without reprieve: Such will the resurrection be.

Secondly, Observe what here is said concerning the Mediator's authority to execute judgment, *ver. 22, 23, 24, 27.* As he hath an almighty power, so he has a sovereign jurisdiction; and who so fit to preside in the great affairs of the other life as he who is the Father and Fountain of life? Here is,

1. Christ's commission or delegation to the office of a judge, which is twice mentioned here; *ver. 22. He hath committed all judgment to the Son*; and again, *ver. 27. Hath given him authority.*

(1.) The Father judgeth no man; not that the Father has resigned the government, but he is pleased to govern by Jesus Christ; so that man is not under the terror of dealing with God immediately, but hath the comfort of access to him by a Mediator. The Father judgeth no man, i. e. (1.) He doth not rule us by a mere right of creation, but by covenant, and upon certain terms settled by a Mediator. Having made us, he may do what he pleaseth with us, as the potter with the clay; but he doth not do so, he draws us with the cords of a man. (2.) He doth not determine our everlasting condition by the covenant of innocency, nor take the advantage he has against us for the violation of that covenant; the Mediator having undertaken to make a vicarious satisfaction, upon which the matter is referred to him, and God is willing to enter upon a new treaty: Not under the law of the Creator, but the grace of the Redeemer.

(2.) He hath committed all judgment to the Son, hath constituted him Lord of all, *Acts x. 36. Rom. xiv. 9.* as Joseph in Egypt, *Gen. xli. 40.* This was prophesied of, *Psal. lxxii. 1. Isa. xi. 3, 4. Jer. xxiii. 5. Mic. v. 1.—4. Psal. lxxvii. 4.—xcvi. 13.—xcviii. 9.* All judgment is committed to our Lord Jesus: for, (1.) He is intrusted with the administration of the providential kingdom, is head over all things, *Eph. i. 20.* Head of every man, *1 Cor. xi. 3.* All things consist by him, *Col. i. 17.* (2.) He is empowered to make laws immediately to bind conscience. I say unto you, is now the form in which the statutes of the kingdom of heaven run; be it enacted by the Lord Jesus; and by his authority. All the acts now in force are touched with his scepter. (3.) He is authorized to appoint and settle the terms of the new covenant, and to draw up the articles of peace between God and man; it is God in Christ that reconciles the world, and to him he has given power to confer eternal life. The book of life is the Lamb's book; by his award we must stand or fall. (4.) He is commissioned to carry on and complete the war with the powers of darkness: to cast out and give judgment against the prince of this world, *John xii. 31.* He is commissioned not only to judge but to make war, *Rev. xix. 12.* All that will fight for God against Satan must lit themselves under his banner. (5.) He is constituted sole manager of the judgment of the great day. The ancients generally understood these words of that crowning act of his judicial power. The final and universal judgment is committed to the Son of man, the tribunal is his, it is the judgment-seat of Christ, the retinue is his, his mighty angels; he will try the causes, and pass the sentence, *Acts xvii. 31.*

(3.) He hath given him authority to execute judgment also, *ver. 27.* Observe, (1.) What the authority is which our Redeemer is invested with; an authority to execute judgment; he has not only a legislative, and judicial power, but an executive power too. The phrase here is used particularly for the judgment of condemnation, *Jude 15. μένος ἐπιτίμης, to execute judgment upon all*, the same with his taking vengeance, *2 Thess. i. 8.* The ruin of impenitent sinners comes from the hand of Christ; he that executeth judgment upon them is the same that would have wrought salvation for them, which makes the sentence unexceptionable; and there is no relief against the sentence of the Redeemer; salvation itself cannot save those whom the Saviour condemns, which makes the ruin remediless. (2.) Whence he has that authority; the Father gave it him. Christ's authority as Mediator is delegated and derived; he acts as the Father's viceroy, as the Lord's anointed, the Lord's Christ.

Now all this redounds very much to the honour of Christ, acquitting him from the guilt of blasphemy, in making himself equal with God; and very much to the comfort of all believers, who may with the greatest assurance venture their all in such hands.

2. Here are the reasons (reasons of state) for which this commission was given him. He hath all judgment committed to him for two reasons.

1. Because he is the Son of man; which speaks three things. (1.) His humiliation and gracious condescension. Man is a worm, the son of man a worm, yet this was the nature, this the character which the Redeemer assumed, in pursuance of the counsels of love; this low estate he stooped to, and submitted to all the mortifications attending it, because it was his Father's will; in recompense therefore of this wonderful obedience God did thus

thus dignify him: because he condescended to be the *Son of man* his Father made him *Lord of all*. Philip. ii. 8, 9. (2.) His affinity and alliance to us. The Father has committed the government of the children of men to him, because being the *Son of man* he is of the same nature with those whom he is set over, and therefore the more unexceptionable, and the more acceptable as a judge. *Their government shall proceed from the midst of them*, Jer. xxx. 20. Of this that law was typical; *One of thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee*, Deut. xvii. 15. (3.) His being the Messiah promised. In that famous vision of his kingdom and glory, *Dim. vii. 13, 14.* he is called the *Son of man*; and *Psal. viii. 4, 5, 6.* thou hast made the Son of man have *dominion over the works of thy hands*. He is the Messiah, and therefore is invested with all this power. The Jews usually called the Christ the *Son of David*; but Christ usually called himself the *Son of man*, which was the more humble title, and speaks him a prince and Saviour, not to the Jewish nation only, but to the whole race of mankind.

(2.) *That all men should honour the Son*, ver. 23. The honouring of Jesus Christ is here spoken of, (1.) As God's great design. The Son intended to glorify the Father, and therefore the Father intended to glorify the Son, *John xiii. 32.* (2.) As man's great duty in compliance with that design. If God will have the Son honoured, it is the duty of all those to honour him to whom he is made known. Observe here,

1. The *dignity* that is to be done to our Lord Jesus. We must *honour the Son*, must look upon him as one that is to be *honoured*, both upon the account of his transcendent excellencies and perfections in himself, and the relations he stands in to us, and must study to give him honour accordingly; must *confess that he is Lord*, and worship him; must honour him who was dishonoured for us.

2. The degree of it; *even as they honour the Father*. This supposeth it our duty to *honour our Father*; for revealed religion is founded on natural religion, and directs us to *honour the Son*, to honour him with *divine honour*; we must honour the Redeemer with the same honour that we honour the Creator with. So far was it from blasphemy that he made himself *equal with God*, that it is the highest injury that can be for us to make him *otherwise*. The truths and laws of the Christian religion, as far as they are revealed, are as sacred and honourable as those of natural religion, and to be equally had in estimation; for we lie under the same obligation to Christ the author of our well-being, that we lie under to the author of our being; and have as necessary a dependence upon the Redeemer's grace, as upon the Creator's providence, which is a sufficient ground for this law, to *honour the Son as we honour the Father*.

To enforce this law, it is added, *He that honours not the Son, honours not the Father which hath sent him*. Some pretend a reverence for the Creator, and speak *honourably* of him, who make light of their Redeemer, and speak *contemptibly* of him; but let such know, that the honours and interests of the Father and Son are so inseparably twisted and interwoven, that the Father never reckons himself *honoured* by any that *dishonour* the Son. Note, (1.) Indignities done to the Lord Jesus reflect upon God himself, and will be so construed and reckoned for in the court of heaven: The Son having so far espoused the Father's honour, as to make *to himself* the *reproaches cast on him*, Rom. xv. 3. the Father doth no less espouse the Son's honour, and counts himself struck at through him. (2.) The reason of this is, because the Son is sent and commissioned by the Father; it is the *Father which hath sent him*. Affronts to an ambassador are justly resented by the prince that sends him. And by this rule, those who truly *honour the Son, honour the Father also*, see Philip. ii. 11.

3. Here is the rule by which the Son goes in executing this commission, so those words seem to come in, *ver. 24. He that heareth and believeth, hath everlasting life*. Where we have the substance of the whole gospel; the preface commands *attention* to a thing most weighty, and *assent* to a thing most certain; *verily, verily, I say unto you*, I, to whom you hear *all judgment is committed*, I, to whose lips is a divine sentence; take from me the Christian's *character and charter*.

1. The *character* of a Christian; *He that heareth my word, and believes on him that sent me*. To be a Christian indeed is, (1.) *To hear the word of Christ*. It is not enough to be within hearing of it, but we must *attend on it*, as scholars on the instructions of their teachers; and *attend to it* as servants to the commands of their masters; we must hear and obey it, must abide by the gospel of Christ as the fixed rule of our faith and practice. (2.) *To believe on him that sent him*: for Christ's design is to *bring us to God*; and as he is the first original of all grace, so he is the last object of all faith. Christ is our *way*, God is our *rest*. We must believe on God as *having sent Jesus Christ*, and recommending himself to our faith and love by manifesting his glory in *the face of Jesus Christ*, 2 Cor. iv. 6. as his Father and our Father.

2. The *charter* of a Christian, which all those are interested in that are Christians indeed. See what we get by Christ: 1. A charter of pardon, *He shall not come into condemnation*: The grace of the gospel is a full discharge from the curse of the law. A believer shall not only not *lie under condemnation* eternally, but not *come into condemnation* now; not come into the danger of it, *Rom. viii. 11. not come into judgment*, not be so much as arraigned. 2. A charter of privileges; he is *passed out of death to life*; is invested in a present happiness in spiritual, and intitled to a future happiness in eternal life. The tenor of the first covenant was, *Do this and live*; the man that doth them shall live in them. Now this proves Christ equal with the Father, that he has power to propose the same benefit to the *hearers of his word*, that had been proposed to the *keeper of the old law*, viz. life; *hear and live, believe and live*, is what we may venture our souls upon when we are disabled to *do and live*; see *John xvii. 2.*

4. Here is the righteousness of his proceedings pursuant to this commission, *ver. 30.* All judgment being committed to him, we cannot but ask *how he manageth it*. And here he answers, *My judgment is just*. All Christ's acts of government, both *legislative and judicial*, are exactly agreeable to the rules of equity, see *Prov. viii. 8.* There can lie no exceptions against any of the determinations of the Redeemer, and therefore as there shall be no repeal of any of his statutes, so there shall be no appeal from any of his sentences.

His judgments are certainly just, for they are directed,

1. By the Father's wisdom. *I can of my ownself do nothing, nothing without the Father, but as I hear, I judge*, as he had said before, *ver. 19.* The Son *can do nothing but what he sees the Father do*; so here, nothing but what he hears the Father say; *As I hear*, (1.) From the secret eternal counsels of the Father, *so I judge*. Would we know what we may depend upon in our dealing with God? *Hear the word of Christ*; we need not dive into the divine counsels, those secret things which belong not to us, but attend to the revealed dictates of Christ's government and judgment, and those will furnish us with an unerring guide; for what Christ has adjudged is an exact copy or counterpart of what the Father has decreed. (2.) From the published records of the Old Testament. Christ in all the execution of his undertaking had an eye to the scripture, and made it his business to conform to that, and fulfil that, *as it was written in the volume*

of the book. Thus he taught us to do *nothing of ourselves*, but *as we hear from the word of God, so to judge of things, and act accordingly*.

2. By the Father's will. *My judgment is just*, and cannot be otherwise, *because I seek not mine own will, but his who sent me*. Not as if the will of Christ were contrary to the will of the Father, as the flesh is contrary to the spirit in us. But, (1.) Christ had, as man, the natural and innocent affections of the human nature, *sense of pain and pleasure*, an inclination to life, an aversion to death, yet he *pleased not himself*; did not confer with these, nor consult these, when he was to go in his undertaking, but acquiesced entirely in the will of his Father. (2.) What he did as Mediator was not the result of any *peculiar, particular* purpose and design of his own; what he did *seek to do* was not for his own mind's sake, but he was therein guided by his Father's will, and the purpose which he had *purposed to himself*. This our Saviour did upon all occasions *refer himself to*, and govern himself by.

Thus our Lord Jesus has opened his commission, (whether to the conviction of his enemies or no) to his own honour, and the everlasting comfort of all his friends, who here see him *able to save him to the uttermost*.

31. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. 32. ¶ There is another that beareth witness of me: and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. 33. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. 34. But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. 35. He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. 36. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. 37. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. 38. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. 39. Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. 40. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. 41. I receive not honour from men. 42. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. 43. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. 44. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only? 45. Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. 46. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. 47. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

In these verses our Lord Jesus proves and confirms the commission he had produced, and makes it out that he was sent of God to be the Messiah.

1. He *sets aside* his own testimony of himself, *ver. 31. If I bear witness of myself*, though it is infallibly true, *John viii. 14.* yet according to the common rule of judgment among men, you will not admit it as *legal proof*, nor allow it to be *given in evidence*. Now, (1.) This *reflects reproach* upon the *sons of men*, and their veracity and integrity. Surely we may say deliberately, what David said in haste, *All men are liars*, else it would never have been such a received maxim, that a man's testimony of himself is suspicious and not to be relied on; it is a sign that self love is stronger than the love of truth. And yet, (2.) It reflects honour on the Son of God, and speaks his wonderful condescension, that though he is the *faithful witness*, the truth itself, who may challenge to be credited *upon his honour*, and his own single testimony, yet is pleased to *wave his privilege*, and, for the confirmation of our faith, refers himself to his *vouchers*, that we might have full satisfaction.

2. He produceth other witnesses that bear testimony to him, that he was sent of God.

First, The Father himself bore testimony to him, *ver. 32. There is another that beareth witness*; which I take to be meant of God the Father, for Christ mentions his testimony with his own, *John viii. 18. I bear witness of myself, and the Father beareth witness of me*. Observe,

1. The seal which the Father put to his commission. He *beareth witness of me*, not only hath done so by a voice from heaven, but still doth so by the tokens of his presence with me. See who they are to whom God will bear witness. (1.) To those whom he *sends and employs*; where he gives commissions, he gives credentials. (2.) To those who *bear witness* to him; so Christ did. God will own and honour those that own and honour him. (3.) To those who decline *bearing witness of themselves*; so Christ did. Those that humble and abase themselves, and seek not their own glory, God will take care they shall not *lose by it*.

2. The satisfaction Christ had in this testimony; *I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true*. I am very well assured that I have a divine mission, and do not in the least hesitate concerning it; thus he had the witness in himself. The devil tempted him to question his being the Son of God, but he never yielded.

Secondly, John Baptist witnessed to Christ, *ver. 33. &c.* John came to bear witness of the light, chap. i. 7. his business was to prepare his way, and direct people to him; *Behold the Lamb of God*. Now the testimony of John was, 1. A solemn and public testimony; ye sent an embassy of priests and Levites to John, which gave him an opportunity of publishing what he had to say; it was not a popular, but a judicial testimony. 2. It was a *true* testimony; he *bore witness to the truth*, as a witness ought to do; *the whole truth, and nothing but the truth*. Christ doth not say, he *bore witness to me*, though every one knew he did, but like an honest man, he *bore witness to the truth*. Now John was confessedly such a holy, good man, so mortified to the world, and so conversant with divine things, that it could not be imagined he should be guilty of such a forgery and imposture, as to say what he did concerning Christ: it had not been so, and if he had not been sure of it.

Two things are added concerning John's testimony.

1. That it was a testimony, *ex abundanti*, more than he needed to vouch, *ver. 34. I receive not testimony from man*. Though Christ saw fit to quote John's testimony, it is with a protestation that it shall not be deemed or construed to as to prejudice the prerogative of his self-sufficiency. Christ needs no letters of commendation, no testimonials or certificates, but what his own worth and excellency brings with him; why then did Christ here urge the testimony of John? Why, *these things I say that ye might be saved*. This he aimed at in all this discourse, to save not his own life, but others' souls; he produced John's testimony, because being one of themselves, it was to be hoped they would hearken to it. Note, (1.) Christ desires and designs the salvation even of his enemies and persecutors. (2.) The word of Christ is the ordinary means of salvation. (3.) Christ in his word considers our infirmities, and condescends to our capacities; consulting not so much what it befits to great a prince to say, as what we can bear, and what will be most likely to do us good.

2. That it was a testimony *ad hominem*, because John Baptist was one whom they had a respect for; *ver. 35. He was light among you*. Observe,

1. The character of John Baptist; he was a *burning and shining light*. Christ often spoke honourably of John, he was now in prison under a cloud, yet Christ gives him his *due praise*, which we must be ready to do to all that faithfully serve God. (1.) He was a *light*, not *sws*, *lux*; so Christ was the light, but *luxus*, *lucerna*, a *luminary*, a derived subordinate light. His office was to enlighten a dark world with notices of the Messiah's approach, to whom he was as the *morning-star*. (2.) He was a *burning light*, which notes *sincerity*: painted fire may be made to shine, but that which burns is true fire. It notes also his *activity*, zeal, and fervency, burning in love to God and the souls of men; fire is always working on itself or something else, so is a good minister. (3.) He was a *shining light*, which notes either his *exemplary conversation*, in which our light shines, *Matt. v. 18*, or an *eminent* diffusive influence. He was illustrious in the sight of others, though he affected obscurity, retirement, and was in the *deserts*; yet such was his doctrine, his baptism, his life, that he became very remarkable, and attracted the eyes of the nation.

2. The affections of the people to him, *Ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light*. (1.) It was a transport they were in upon the appearing of John; *ye were willing* *ἡσυχάζετε*, *ye delighted to rejoice in his light*; you were very proud that you had such a man among you, that what the honour of your country; *ye were willing*, *ἡσυχάζετε*, willing to *dance*, and make a noise about this light, as boys about a bonfire. (2.) It was but transient, and soon over; *ye were fond of him*, *ἡσυχάζετε*, for an hour, for a season, as little children are fond of a new thing, *ye were pleased with John a while*, but soon grew weary of him and his ministry, and said *he had a devil*, and now you have him in prison. Note, Many that seem to be affected and pleased with the gospel at first, afterwards despise and reject it; it is common for forward and noisy professors to cool and fall off. These here rejoiced in John's light, but never walked in it, and therefore did not stick to it, like the stony ground. While Herod was a friend to John Baptist, the people cared for him, but when he fell under Herod's frowns he lost their favours. *Ye were willing to countenance John*, *ἡσυχάζετε*, i. e. for temporal ends, so some take it; you were glad of him in hopes to make a tool of him, by his interest and under the umbrage of his name, to have shaken off the Roman yoke, and recovered the civil liberty and honour of your country. Now, (1.) Christ mentions their respects to John, to condemn them for their present opposition to him, to whom John bore witness. If they had continued their veneration for John, as they ought to have done, they would have embraced Christ. (2.) He mentions the passing away of their respects, to justify God in depriving them, as he had now done, of John's ministry, and putting that light under a bushel.

Thirdly, Christ's own works witnessed to him, *ver. 36. I have a testimony greater than that of John: for if ye believe the witness of men, sent of God as John was, the witness of God immediately, and not by the ministry of men, is greater*, 1 John v. 9. Observe, Though the witness of John was a less cogent and less considerable witness, yet our Lord was pleased to make use of it. We must be glad of all the supports that offer themselves for the confirmation of our faith, though they may not amount to a demonstration, and not *invalidate* any, under pretence there are others more *conclusive*; we have occasion for them all.

Now this greater witness was the works which his father had given him to *signify*. That is,

1. In general. The whole course of his life and ministry, his revealing God and his will to us, setting up his kingdom among men, reforming the world, destroying Satan's kingdom, restoring fallen man to his primitive purity and felicity, and shedding abroad in men's hearts the love of God and one another. All that work, of which he said when he died, *It is finished*, it was all, from first to last, *opus deo dignum*; all he said and did was *holy and heavenly*, and a divine purity; power and grace shone in it, and proved abundantly that he was sent of God.

2. In particular. The miracles he wrought for the proof of his divine mission witnessed of him. Now it is here said, 1. That these works were given him by the Father, that is, he was both appointed and empowered to work them, for, as Mediator, he derived both commission and strength from his Father. 2. They were given him to *finish*; he must do all those works of wonder which the counsel and foreknowledge of God had before determined to be done; and his finishing them proves a divine power, for as for God his work is perfect. 3. These works did bear witness of him, did prove that he was sent of God, and that what he said concerning himself was true; see *Heb. ii. 4. Acts ii. 22*. That the Father had sent him, as a father, not as a master sends his servant on an errand, but as a father sends his son to take possession for himself; if God had not sent him, he would not have seconded him, would not have sealed him, as he did by the works he gave him to do; for the world's Creator will never be its deceiver.

Fourthly, He produceth more fully than before his Father's testimony concerning him, *ver. 37. The Father that sent me hath borne witness of me*. The prince doth not use to follow his ambassador himself to confirm his commission *in voce*, but God was pleased to bear witness of his Son himself by a voice from heaven at his baptism, *Matt. iii. 17. this is my ambassador, This is my beloved Son*. The Jews reckoned Bath-kol, the daughter of a voice, a voice from heaven, one of the ways by which God made known his mind; in that way he owned Christ publicly and solemnly, and repeated it, *Matt. xvi. 5*. Note, 1. Those whom God sends he will bear witness of; where he gives a commission he will not fail to seal it; he that never left himself without witness, (*Acts xiv. 17*) will never leave any of his servants so, who go upon his errand. 2. Where God demands belief, he will not fail to give sufficient evidence, as he has done concerning Christ. That which was to be witnessed concerning Christ, was chiefly this, that the God we had offended was willing to accept of him as mediator. Now concerning this, he has himself (and he was fittest to do it) given us full satisfaction, declaring himself well pleased in him; if we be so, the work is done.

Now it might be suggested, if God himself thus bore witness of Christ, how came it to pass that he was not universally received by the Jewish na-

tion and their rulers? To this Christ here answers, that it was not to be thought strange, nor could their infidelity weaken his credibility, for two reasons,

1. Because they were not acquainted with such extraordinary revelations of God and his will. *Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape or appearance*. They shewed themselves to be as ignorant of God, though they professed relation to him, as we are of a man we never either saw or heard. But what do I talk to you of God's bearing witness of me, he is one you know nothing of, nor have any acquaintance or communion with. Note, Ignorance of God is the true reason of men's rejecting the record he has given concerning his Son. A right understanding of *natural religion* would discover to us such admirable congruities in the Christian religion, as would greatly dispose our minds to the entertainment of it. Some give this sense of it; the Father bore witness of me by a *voice*, and the descent of a *dove*, which is such an extraordinary thing; that you never saw or heard the like; and yet for my sake there was such a voice and appearance; yea, and you might have heard that voice, you might have seen that appearance as others did if you had closely attended the ministry of John, but by slighting it you missed of that testimony.

2. Because they were not affected, no not with the ordinary ways by which God had revealed himself to them; *ver. 38. Ye have not his word abiding in you*. They had the scriptures of the Old Testament; might they not by them be disposed to receive Christ? Yes, if they had had their due influence upon them. But, (1.) The word of God was not in them; it was among them in their country, in their hands, but not in them, in their hearts; not ruling in their souls, but only shining in their eyes, and sounding in their ears. What did it avail them that they had the oracles of God committed to them, *Rom. iii. 2*, when they had not these oracles commanding in them? If they had, they would readily have embraced Christ. (2.) It did not abide. Many have the word of God coming into them, and making some impressions for a while, but it doth not abide with them, it is not constantly in them, as a man at home, but only now and then as a wayfaring man. If the word abide in us, if we converse with it by frequent meditation, consult with it upon every occasion, and conform to it in our conversation, we shall then readily receive the witness of the Father concerning Christ, see *John vii. 17*.

But how did it appear that they had not the word of God abiding in them? It appeared by this, whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. There was so much said in the Old Testament concerning Christ, to direct people when and where to look for him, and so to facilitate the discovery of him, that if they had duly considered those things, they could not have avoided the conviction of Christ's being sent to God; so that their not believing in Christ, was a certain sign that the word of God did not abide in them. Note, The indwelling of the word, and Spirit, and grace of God in us, is best tried by the effects of it, particularly by our receiving what he sends; the commands he sends, the messengers, the providences he sends, especially Christ, whom he hath sent.

Fifthly, The last witness he calls is the Old Testament, which witnessed of him, and to it he appeals, *ver. 39, &c. Search the Scriptures*, *ἑσυχάζετε*; it may be read, either, (1.) *Ye do search the scriptures*, and ye do well to do so; you read them daily in your synagogues, you have rabbies and doctors, and scribes, that make it their business to study them and criticize upon them. The Jews boasted of the flourishing of scripture learning in the days of Hillel, who died about twelve years after Christ's birth, and reckoned some of those who were then members of the Sanhedrin, the *beauties of their wisdom*, and the *glories of their law*, and Christ owns, that they did indeed search the scriptures, but it was in search of their own glory; *ye do search the scriptures*, and therefore if ye were not *willfully blind* you would believe in me. Note, It is possible for men to be very studious in the letter of the scripture, and yet to be strangers to the power and influence of it. Or, (2.) As we read it, *search the scriptures*; and so, 1. It was spoken to them in the nature of an appeal; you profess to receive and believe the scripture, there I will join issue with you, let that be the judge, provided you will not rest in the letter, (*herere in cortice*) but will search into it. Note, When appeals are made to the scriptures they must be searched. Search the whole book of scripture throughout, compare one passage with another, and explain one by another. We must likewise search particular passages to the bottom, and see not what they seem to say *prima facie*, but what they say indeed. 2. It is spoken to us in the nature of an advice, or command to all Christians to search the scriptures. Note, All those who would find Christ, must search the scriptures; not only read them, and hear them, but search them. Which notes, (1.) Diligence in seeking, labour and study, and a close application of mind. (2.) Desire and design of finding. We must aim at some spiritual ben. fit and advantage in reading and studying the scripture, and often ask what am I now searching for? We must search as for *hid treasure*, *Prov. ii. 4*, as those that sink for gold or silver, or that dive for pearl, *Joh. xviii. 1—11*. This enabled the Bereans, *Acts xvii. 11*.

Now there are two things which we are here directed to have in our eye; in our searching of the scripture; *heaven* our end, and *Christ* our way.

1. We must search the scriptures for *heaven* as our great end; for in them ye think ye have eternal life. The scripture assures us of an eternal state set before us, and offers to us an eternal life in that state; it contains the chart that describes it, the charter that conveys it, the direction in the way that leads to it, and the foundation upon which the hope of it is built; and this is worth searching for, there where we are sure to find it. But to the Jews Christ faith only, ye think ye have eternal life in the scriptures; because, though they did retain the belief and hope of eternal life, and grounded their expectations of it upon the scriptures, yet therein they missed it, that they looked for it by the bare reading and studying of the scripture. It was a common, but corrupt saying among them, *he that has the words of the law has eternal life*; they thought they were sure of heaven, if they could say by heart, or rather by rote, such and such passages of scripture as they were directed to by the tradition of the elders; as they thought all the vulgar cursed, because they did not thus know the law, *John vii. 49*, so they concluded all the learned undoubtedly blessed.

2. We must search the scriptures for *Christ*, as the new and living way that leads to this end. Those are they, the great and principal witnesses that testify of me. Note, 1. The scriptures, even those of the Old Testament, testify of Christ, and by them God bears witness to him. The Spirit of Christ in the prophets testified beforehand of him, 1 *Pet. i. 11*, the purposes and promises of God concerning him, and the previous notices of him. The Jews knew very well that the Old Testament testified of the Messiah, and were critical in their remarks upon the passages that looked that way, and yet were careless, and wretchedly overseen in the application of them. 2. Therefore, we must search the scriptures, and may hope to find eternal life in that search, because they testify of Christ; for this is *life eternal*, to know him, see 1 *John v. 11*. Christ is the treasure hid in the field of the scriptures, those wells, the milk in those breasts.

To this testimony he annexeth a reproof for their infidelity and wickedness in four instances: particularly,

1. Their neglect of him and his doctrine, *ver. 40. Ye will not come to me that*

that we might have life. You search the scriptures, you believe the prophets, which you cannot but see testify of me, and yet you will not *come to me*, to whom they direct you. Their estrangement from Christ was not so much the fault of their *understandings* as of their *wills*. This is expressed as a complaint; Christ offered life, and it would not be accepted. Note, 1. There is life to be had with Jesus Christ for poor souls; we may have life, the life of pardon and grace, and comfort and glory: life is the perfection of our being, and inclusive of all happiness; and Christ is our life. 2. Those that would have this life, must come to Jesus Christ for it, we may have it for the coming for. It supposeth an assent of the understanding to the doctrine of Christ, and the record given concerning him; it lies in the consent of the will to his government and grace, and it produceth an answerable compliance in the affections and actions. 3. The only reason why sinners die, is because they will not come to Christ for life and happiness; it is not because they cannot, but because they will not. They will neither accept of the life offered, because spiritual and divine; nor will they agree to the terms on which it is offered, nor apply themselves to the use of the appointed means; they will not be cured, for they will not observe the methods of cure. The wilfulness and obstinacy of sinners in rejecting the tenders of grace, is a great grief to the Lord Jesus, and what he complains of.

Those words, ver. 41. *I receive not honour from men*, come in in a parenthesis, to obviate an objection against him, as if he sought his own glory, and made himself the head of party, in obliging all to come to him, and applaud him. Note, 1. He did not covet or court the applause of men; did not in the least affect that worldly pomp and splendor which the carnal Jews expected their Messiah to appear in. He charged those he cured not to make him known, and withdrew from those that would have made him king. 2. He had not the applause of men. Instead of receiving honour from men, he received a great deal of dishonour and disgrace from men, for he made himself of no reputation. 3. He needed not the applause of men, it was no addition to his glory, whom all the angels of God worship; nor was he any otherwise pleased with it, than as it was according to the Father's will, and for the happiness of those, who in giving honour to him, received much greater honour from him.

2. Their want of the love of God, ver. 42. *I know you very well, that you have not the love of God in you*. Why should I wonder that you do not come to me, when you want even the first principle of natural religion, which is the love of God. Note, The reason why people slight Christ, is because they do not love God; for if we did indeed love God, we should love him who is his express image, and hasten to him by whom only we may be restored to the favour of God. He had charged them, ver. 37. with ignorance of God, and here with want of love to him; therefore men have not the love of God, because they desire not the knowledge of him.

Observe, (1.) The crime charged upon them, *You have not the love of God in you*. They pretended a great love to God, and thought they proved it by their zeal for the law, the temple, and the sabbath, and yet they were really without the love of God. Note, There are many who make a great profession of religion, that shew they want the love of God by their neglect of Christ and their contempt of his commandments; they hate his holiness, and undervalue his goodness. Observe, It is the love of God in us, the love that is seated in the heart, and is living active principle there, that God will accept; the love shed abroad there, Rom. v. 5.

(2.) The proof of this charge, by the personal knowledge of Christ, who searcheth the heart, Rev. ii. 23. and knows what is in man; *I know you*. Christ sees through all our disguises, and can say to each of us, *I know thee*. 1. Christ knows men better than their neighbours know them. The people thought that the Scribes and Pharisees were very devout and good men, but Christ knew they had nothing of the love of God in them. 2. Christ knows men better than they know themselves. These Jews had a very good opinion of themselves, but Christ knew how corrupt their inside was, notwithstanding the plausible shews of their outside; we may deceive ourselves, but we cannot deceive him. 3. Christ knows men that do not, and will not know him; he looks on those who industriously look off him, and calls them by their own name, their true name, who have not known him.

3. Another crime charged upon them, is their readiness to entertain false christs and false prophets, while they obstinately opposed him who was the true Messiah, ver. 43. *I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive*. He affirmed, O heavens, at this, Jer. ii. 12, 13. *for my people have committed two evils, great evils indeed*. (1.) They have forsaken the fountain of living waters, for they would not receive Christ, who came in his Father's name, had his commission from his Father, and did all for his glory. (2.) They have *hewn out broken cisterns*, they hearken to every one that will set up his own name. They forsake their own mercies, that is bad enough, and it is for lying vanities, that is worse. Observe here, (1.) Those are false prophets, who come in their own name, who run without being sent, and set up for themselves only. (2.) It is just with God to suffer those to be deceived with false prophets, who receive not the truth in the love of it, 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11. The errors of antichrist are the just punishment of those who obey not the doctrine of Christ. They that shut their eyes against the true light, are by the judgment of God given up to wander endlessly after false lights, and to be laid aside after every ignis fatuus. (3.) It is the gross folly of many, that while they nauseate ancient truths, they are fond of upstart errors; they loathe manna, and at the same time feed upon ashes. After the Jews had rejected Christ and his gospel, they were continually haunted with spectres, with false christs and false prophets, Matt. xxiv. 24. and their proneness to follow such, occasioned those distractions and seditions that hastened their ruin.

4. They are here charged with pride and vain-glory, and unbelief, the effect of it, ver. 44. Having sharply reprov'd their unbelief, like a wise physician, he here searcheth into the cause, lays the axe to the root. They therefore slighted and undervalued Christ, because they admired and over-valued themselves. Here is,

1. Their ambition of worldly honour: Christ despised it, ver. 41. They set their hearts upon it; *Ye receive honour one of another*, i. e. ye look for a Messiah in outward pomp, and promise yourselves worldly honour by him. *You receive honour*, i. e. 1. You desire to receive it, and aim at that in all you do. 2. Ye give honour to others, and applaud them, only that they may return it, and may applaud you. *Petimus dubimisque vicissim*. It is the proud man's art to throw honour upon others, only that it may rebound upon himself. 3. You are very careful to keep all the honours to yourselves, and confine them to your own party, as if you had the monopoly of that which is honourable. 4. What respects are shewed you, you receive them yourselves, and do not transmit them to God, as Herod. Idolizing men and their sentiments, and affecting to be idolized by them, and their applauds, are pieces of idolatry, as directly contrary to Christianity as any other.

Their neglect of spiritual honour, called here *the honour that comes from God only*; this they sought not, nor minded. Note, 1. True honour is that which comes from God only, that is real and lasting honour; those are honourable indeed whom he takes into covenant and communion with himself,

2. This honour have all the saints. All that believe in Christ, through him, receive the honour that comes from God: He is not partial, but will give glory wherever he gives grace. 3. This honour that comes from God, we must seek, must aim at it, and act for it, and take up with nothing short of it, Rom. ii. 1. we must account it our reward, as the Pharisees accounted the praise of men. 4. Those that will not come to Christ, and those that are ambitious of worldly honour, make it appear that they seek not the honour that comes from God, and it is their folly and ruin.

3. The influence this had upon their infidelity. *How can ye believe who are thus affected?* Observe here, (1.) The difficulty of believing ariseth from ourselves and our own corruption; we make our work hard to ourselves, and then complain it is impracticable. (2.) The ambition and affectation of worldly honour is a great hindrance to faith in Christ. How can they believe, who make the praise and applause of men their idol? When the profession and practice of serious godliness is unfashionable, is every where spoken against: when Christ and his followers are men wondered at, and to be a Christian, is to be like a *speckled bird*, (and this is the common case) how can they believe, the top of whose ambition is to make a fair show in the flesh?

Sixthly, The last witness here called is Moses, ver. 45, &c. The Jews had a great veneration for Moses, and valued themselves upon their being the disciples of Moses, and pretended to adhere to Moses in their opposition to Christ: but Christ here shews them,

1. That Moses was a witness against the unbelieving Jews, and accused them to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses. This may be understood either, (1.) As shewing the difference between the law and the gospel. Moses that is the law, accuseth you, for by the law is the knowledge of sin: it condemneth you, it is to those that trust to it a ministration of death and condemnation; but it is not the design of Christ's gospel to accuse us: *Think not that I will accuse you*. Christ did not come into the world as a *Momus* to find fault and pick quarrels with every body, or as a *spy* upon the actions of men, or a *promoter* to fish for crimes; no, he came to be an advocate, not an accuser; to reconcile God and man, and not to set them more at variance; what fools were they then that adhered to Moses against Christ, and desired to be under the law? Gal. iv. 21. Or, (2.) As shewing the manifest unreasonableness of their infidelity. Think not that I will appeal from your bar to God's, and challenge you to answer there for what you do against me, as injured innocence uses to do; no, I do not need, you are already accused, and cast in the court of heaven; Moses himself saith enough to convict you of, and condemn you for, your unbelief. Let them not mistake concerning Christ, though he was a prophet, he did improve his interest in heaven against those that persecuted him, did not as Elias make intercession against Israel, Rom. xi. 2. or as Jeremiah, desire to see God's vengeance on them, Jer. xx. 12. Instead of accusing his crucifiers to his Father, he prayed *Father forgive him*. Nor let them mistake concerning Moses, as if he would stand by them in rejecting Christ; no, *There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust*. Note, 1. External privileges and advantages are commonly the vain confidence of those who reject Christ and his grace. The Jews trusted in Moses, and thought their having his laws and ordinances would save them. 2. Those that confide in their privileges and do not improve them, will find not only that their confidence is disappointed, but that those very privileges will be witnesses against them.

2. That Moses was a witness for Christ, and to his doctrine, ver. 46, 47. *he wrote of me*. Moses did particularly prophecy of Christ, as the seed of the woman; the seed of Abraham, the Shiloh, the great prophet; the ceremonies of the law of Moses were figures of him that was to come. The Jews made Moses the patron of their opposition to Christ, but Christ here shews them their error, that Moses was so far from writing against Christ, that he wrote for him, and of him. But,

1. Christ here charges it on the Jews, that they did not believe Moses. He had said, ver. 45. that they trusted in Moses, and yet here undertakes to make out that they did not believe Moses; they trusted to his name, but they did not receive his doctrine in its true sense and meaning; they did not rightly understand, nor give credit to what there was in the writings of Moses concerning the Messiah.

2. He proves this charge from their disbelief of him; *Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me*. Note, 1. The surest trial of faith is by the effects it produceth; many say they believe, whose actions give their words the lie, for had they believed the scriptures, they would have done otherwise than they did. 2. Those who rightly believe one part of scripture will receive every part. The prophecies of the Old Testament were so fully accomplished in Christ, that they who rejected Christ, did in effect deny those prophecies and set them aside.

3. From their disbelief of Moses, he infers that it was not strange they rejected him. *If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?* How can it be thought ye should? (1.) If ye do not believe sacred writings, those oracles which are in black and white, which is the most certain way of conveyance, how shall ye believe my words, which are to be less regarded? (2.) If you do not believe Moses, for whom you have such a profound veneration, how is it likely you should believe me, whom you look upon with so much contempt? see Exod. vi. 12. (3.) If ye believe not what Moses spake and wrote of me, which is a strong and cogent testimony for me, how shall ye believe me, and my mission? If we admit not the premises, how shall we admit the conclusion? The truth of the Christian religion, it being a matter purely of divine revelation, depends upon the divine authority of the scripture; if therefore we believe not the divine inspiration of those writings, how shall we receive the doctrine of Christ?

Thus ends Christ's plea for himself, in answer to the charge exhibited against him; what effect it had we know not; it should seem to have had this, their mouths were stopped for the present, and they could not for shame but drop the prosecution, and yet their hearts were hardened.

C H A P. VI.

In this chapter we have, (1.) The miracle of the loaves, ver. 1—14. (2.) Christ's walking upon the water, ver. 15—21. (3.) The people's flocking after him to Capernaum, ver. 22—25. (4.) His conference with them, occasioned by the miracle of the loaves, in which he reproves them for seeking carnal food, and directs them to spiritual food, ver. 26, 27. shewing them how they must labour for spiritual food, ver. 28, 29. and what that spiritual food is, ver. 30—39. (5.) Their discontent at what he said, and the reproof he gave them for it, ver. 40—45. (6.) The apostasy of many from him, and his discourse with his disciples that adhered to him upon that occasion, ver. 46—71.

1. AFTER these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. 2. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. 3.

And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. 4. And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. 5. ¶ When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? 6. And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. 7. Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. 8. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, 9. There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? 10. And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. 11. And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. 12. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. 13. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. 14. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

We have here an account of Christ's feeding five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes; which miracle is in this respect remarkable, that it is the only passage of the actions of Christ's life, that is recorded by all the four evangelists. John, who useth not to relate what had been recorded by those who wrote before him, yet relates this, because of the reference the following discourse has to it.

Observe, 1. The place and time, where and when this miracle was wrought, which are noted for the greater evidence of the truth of the story; it is not said that it was done once upon a time, no body knew where, but the circumstances are specified, that the fact might be enquired into.

1. The country that Christ was in, *ver. 1.* He went over the sea of Galilee, called elsewhere the lake of Genesareth, here the sea of Tiberias; from a city adjoining, which Herod had lately enlarged and beautified, and called so in honour of Tiberius the emperor, and probably had made his metropolis. Christ did not go directly over, cross this inland sea, but made a *coasting voyage* to another place on the same side. It is not tempting God to choose to go *by water* when there is convenience for it, even to those places whither we might go *by land*; for Christ never tempted the Lord his God, *Matt. iv. 7.*

2. The company that he was attended with; *A great multitude followed him because they saw his miracles, ver. 2.* Note, 1. Our Lord Jesus while he went about doing good, lived continually in a crowd, which gave him more trouble than honour. Good and useful men must not complain of a *hurry* of business when they are serving God and their generation; it will be time enough to enjoy ourselves, when we come to that world where we shall enjoy God. 2. Christ's miracles drew many after him that were not effectually drawn to him. They had their curiosity gratified by the strangeness of them, who had not their consciences convinced by the power of them.

3. Christ putting himself advantageously to entertain them, *ver. 3.* He went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples, that he might the more conveniently be seen, and heard by the multitude that crowded after him; this was a natural pulpit, and not like Ezra's made for the purpose. Christ was now driven to be a *field-preacher*, but his word was never the worse, nor the less acceptable for that, to those who knew how to value it; who followed him still, not only when he went out to a desert place, but when he went up to a mountain, though *up-hill* be against heart. He sat there, as teachers used to do in cathedra; he did not sit at ease, nor sit in state, yet sat as one having authority: sat ready to receive addresses that were made to him, whoever would, might come and find him there. He sat with his disciples, he condescended to take them to sit with him, to put a reputation upon them before the people, and give them an earnest of the glory in which they should shortly sit with him. We are said to sit with him, *Eph. ii. 6.*

4. The time when it was. The first words after those things, do not signify that this immediately followed what was related in the foregoing chapter, for it was a considerable time after, and they signify no more but in process of time; but we are told, *ver. 4.* that it was when the passover was nigh; which is here noted, (1.) Because, perhaps that had brought in all the apostles from their respective expeditions, whither they were sent as itinerant preachers, that they might attend their Master to Jerusalem too keep the feast. (2.) Because it was a custom with the Jews, religiously to observe the approach of the passover thirty days before, with some sort of solemnity; so long before they had it in their eye, repaired the roads, mended bridges, if occasion were, and discoursed of the passover and the institution of it. (3.) Because, perhaps the approach of the passover, when every one knew Christ would go up to Jerusalem, and be absent for some time, made the multitude flock the more after him, and attend the more diligently on him. Note, The prospect of losing our opportunities, should quicken us to improve them with double diligence. And when solemn ordinances are approaching, it is good to prepare for them by conversing with the word of Christ.

5. The miracle itself. And there observe,

1. The notice Christ took of the crowd that attended him, *ver. 5.* He lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come to him, poor, mean, ordinary people no doubt, for such make up the multitudes, especially in such remote corners of the country, yet Christ shewed himself pleased with their attendance, and concerned for their welfare; to teach us to condescend to them of low estate, and not to sit those with the dogs of our flock, whom Christ hath set with the lambs of his. The souls of the poor are as precious to Christ, and should be so to us, as those of the rich.

2. The enquiry he made concerning the way of providing for them. He directed himself to Philip, who had been his disciple from the first, and had seen all his miracles, and particularly that of his turning water into wine, and therefore it might be expected that he should have said, Lord, if thou

wilt, it is easy to thee to feed them all; those that, like Israel, have been witnesses of Christ's works, and have shared in the benefit of them, are inexcusable if they say, *Can he furnish a table in the wilderness?* Philip was of Bethsaida, in the neighbourhood of which town Christ now was, and therefore he was most likely to help them to provision at the best hand; and probably much of the company was known to him, and he concerned for them. Now Christ asked, *Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?* (1.) He takes it for granted that they must all eat with him. One would think when he taught, and healed them, he had done his part; and now they should rather have been contriving how to treat him and his disciples, for some of the people, it is likely, were rich, and we are sure that Christ and his disciples were poor; yet he is solicitous to entertain them. Those that will accept Christ's spiritual gifts, instead of paying for them, shall be paid for their acceptance of them. Christ having fed their souls with the bread of life, feed their bodies also with food convenient, to shew that the Lord is for the body, and to encourage us to pray for our daily bread; and to set us an example of compassion to the poor, *James ii. 15.* (2.) His enquiry is, *Whence shall we buy bread?* One would think, considering his poverty, he should rather have asked, where shall we have money to buy for them? But he would rather lay out all he has than they shall want. He will buy to give, and we must labour that we may give, *Eph. iv. 28.*

3. The design of this enquiry, it was only to try the faith of Philip, for he himself knew what he would do, *ver. 6.* Note, 1. Our Lord Jesus is never at a loss in his counsels, but how difficult soever the case is, he knows what he has to do, and what course he will take, *Acts xv. 18.* He knows the thoughts he has towards his people, *Jer. xxix. 11.* and is never at uncertainty, when we know not he himself knows what he will do. 2. When Christ is pleased to puzzle his people, it is only with a design to prove them. The question put Philip to a nonplus, yet Christ proposed it to try whether he would say, Lord, if thou wilt exert thy power for them we need not buy bread.

4. Philip's answer to the question, *Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient, ver. 7.* Master, it is to no purpose to talk of buying bread for them, for neither will the country afford so much bread, nor can we afford to lay out so much money; ask Judas else, who carries the bag. Two hundred pence of their money amounts to about six pounds of ours, and if they lay out all that at once, it will exhaust their fund, and break them, and they must starve themselves. Grotius computes, that two hundred pennyworth of bread would scarce repel to two thousand, but Philip would go as near hand as he could, will have every one to take a little; and nature, we say, is content with a little. See the weakness of Philip's faith, that in this strait, as if the matter of the family had been an ordinary person, he looked for supply only in an ordinary way. Christ might now have said to him, as he did afterwards, *Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?* Or as God to Moses in a like case, *Is the Lord's hand waxen short?* We are apt thus to distrust God's power when visible and ordinary means fail, that is, to trust him no further than we can see him.

5. The information which Christ received from another of his disciples concerning the provision they had. It was Andrew, here said to be Simon Peter's brother: though he was senior to Peter in discipleship, and instrumental to bring Peter to Christ, yet Peter afterwards so far outshone him, that he is described by his relation to Peter: he acquainted Christ with what they had at hand; and in that we may see,

(1.) The strength of his love to those whom he saw his Master concerned for, in that he was willing to bring out all they had, though he knew not but they might want themselves, and any one would have said, *Charity begins at home.* He did not go about to conceal it, under pretence of being a better husband of their provision than the Master was, but honestly gives in an account of all they had. There is a lad here, *ψαλμαρον*, a little lad, probably one that used to follow this company, as sutlers do the camp, with provisions to sell, and the disciples had bespoke what he had for themselves; and it was five barley-loaves, and two small fishes. Here, (1.) The provision was coarse and ordinary; they were barley-loaves. Canaan was a land of wheat, *Deut. viii. 8.* its inhabitants were commonly fed with the finest wheat, *Psal. lxxxii. 16.* the kidneys of wheat, *Deut. xxxii. 14.* yet Christ and his disciples were glad of barley-bread. It doth not follow hence that we should tie ourselves to such coarse fare, and place religion in it, when God brings that which is finer to our hands, let us receive it and be thankful; but it doth not follow that therefore we must not be desirous of dainties, *Prov. xxiii. 5.* nor murmur if we be reduced to coarse fare, but be content and thankful, and be well reconciled to it; barley-bread is what Christ had; and better than we deserve: nor let us despise the mean provision of the poor, nor look upon it with contempt, remembering how Christ was provided for. (2.) It was short and scanty; there were but five loaves, and those so small that one little lad carried them all; and we find, *2 Kings iv. 42, 43.* that twenty barley-loaves, with some other provision to help out, would not dine a hundred men without a miracle. There were but two fishes, and those small ones, *δυσχέρις*, so small that one of them was but a morsel: *πισculi assati*, I take the fish to be pickled or soured, for they had not fire to dress them with. The provision of bread was little, but that of fish was left in proportion to it, so that many a bit of dry bread they must eat before they could make a meal of this provision; but they were content with it. Bread is meat for our hunger, but they that murmured for flesh, it is said, they asked meat for their lust, *Psal. lxxviii. 18.* Well, Andrew was willing the people should have this as far as it would go. Note, A distrustful fear of wanting ourselves should not hinder us from needful charity to others.

(2.) See here the weakness of his faith in that word, *But what are they among so many?* To offer that to such a multitude is but to mock them. Philip and he had not that actual consideration of the power of Christ, which they had had to large experience of, as they should have had. Who fed the camp of Israel in the wilderness? He that could make one man chase a thousand, could make one loaf feed a thousand.

6. The direction Christ gave the disciples to feed the guests, *ver. 10.* Make the men sit down, though ye have nothing to set before them, and trust me for that; this was like sending providence to market, and going to buy without money: Christ would thus try their obedience. Observe, 1. The furniture of the dining room; there was much grass in that place, though a desert place; see how bountiful nature is, make grass to grow upon the mountains, *Psal. clixvii. 8.* The grass was uncut; God gives not only enough, but more than enough. Here was this plenty of grass where Christ was preaching; the gospel brings other blessings along with it. *Thou shalt the earth yield her increase,* *Psal. lxxvii. 6.* This plenty of grass made the grass for cushions or beds, (as they called what they sat on at meat, *Escher. i. 6.*) and considering what Christ saith of the grass of the field, *Matt. vi. 29, 30.* these beds exceeded those of Ahasuerus: nature's pomp is the most glorious. 2. The number of the guests, about five thousand. A great entertainment, representing that of the gospel, which is a feast for all nations, *Isa. xxv. 6.* a feast for all comers.

7. The distribution of the provision, *ver. 11.* Observe, 1. It was done with thanksgiving; he *gave thanks*. Note, 1. We ought to give thanks to God for our food, for it is a mercy to have it, and we have it from the hand of God, and must receive it with thanksgiving. 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5. And this is the sweetness of our creature-comforts, that they will furnish us with matter, and give us occasion for that excellent duty of thanksgiving. 2. Though our provision be coarse and scanty; though we have neither plenty nor dainty, yet we must give thanks to God for what we have.

2. It was distributed from the hand of Christ by the hands of his disciples, *ver. 11.* Note, 1. All our comforts come to us originally from the hand of Christ; whoever brings them, it is he that sends them, he distributes to them who distributes to us. 2. In distributing the bread of life to those that follow him, he is pleased to make use of the ministrations of his disciples, they are the servants at Christ's table, or rather rulers in his household, to give to every one their portion of meat in due season.

3. It was done to universal satisfaction. They did not every one take a little, but all had *as much as they would*; not a short allowance, but a full meal; and considering how long they had fasted, with what an appetite they sat down, how agreeable this miraculous food may be supposed to be above common food, it was not a little that served them, when they eat as much as they would, and on free cost. Those whom Christ feeds with the bread of life do not *fast*, Psal. lxxxi. 10. There were but *two small fishes*, and yet they had of them too *as much as they would*. He did not reserve them for the better sort of the guests, and put off the poor with dry bread, but he treated them all alike, for they were all alike welcome. They who call feeding upon fish *fasting*, reproach the entertainment Christ here made, which was a *full feast*.

8. The care that was taken of the broken meat.

1. The orders Christ gave concerning it, *ver. 12.* When they were filled, and every one had within him a sensible witness to the truth of the miracle; Christ said to the disciples, the servants he employed, *Gather up the fragments*. Note, We must always take care that we make no waste of any of God's good creatures; for the grant we have of them, though large and full, is with this proviso *wilful waste only excepted*. It is just with God to bring us to the want of that which we make a waste of. The Jews were very careful not to lose any bread, or let it fall to the ground to be trodden upon. *Qui panem contemnit in gravem incidet paupertatem*, was a saying among them. Though Christ could command supplies whenever he pleased, yet he would have the fragments gathered up. When we are filled we must remember that others want, and we may want. Those that would have wherewith to be *charitable*, must be *provident*. Had this broken meat been left upon the grass, the beasts and fowls would have gathered it up; but that which is fit to be meat for men is wasted and lost if it be thrown to the brute creatures. Christ did not order the broken meat to be gathered up till all were filled; we must not begin to hoard any lay up till all is laid out that ought to be; for that is withholding more than is meet. Mr. Baxter notes here, "How much less should we lose God's word, or helps, our dear time, or such greater mercies."

2. The observance of these orders, *ver. 13.* They filled twelve baskets with the fragments; which was an evidence not only of the truth of the miracle that they were fed, not with fancy but with real food, witness those remains, but of the greatness of it; they were not only filled, but there was also this over and above; see how large the divine bounty is; it not only fills the cup, but makes it run over, bread enough and to spare in our Father's house. The fragments filled twelve baskets, one for each disciple; they were thus repaid with interest for their willingness to part with what they had for public service; see 2 Chron. xxxi. 10. The Jews lay it as a law upon themselves when they have eaten a meal, to be sure to leave a piece of bread upon the table, upon which the blessing after meat may rest; for it is a curse upon the wicked man, Job xx. 21. That there shall none of his meat be left.

3. Here is the influence which this miracle had upon the people who tasted of the benefit of it, *ver. 14.* they said, *This is of a truth that prophet*. Note, 1. Even the vulgar Jews with great assurance expected the Messiah to come into the world, and to be a *great prophet*. They speak here with assurance of his coming. The Pharisees despised them as *not knowing the law*, but it should seem they knew more of him than that is the *end of the law*, than they did. 2. The miracles which Christ wrought did clearly demonstrate that he was the Messiah promised, a teacher come from God, the great prophet, and could not but convince the amazed spectators that this was he that should come. 3. There were many who were convinced he was that prophet which should come into the world, who yet did not cordially receive his doctrine, for they did not continue in it. Such a wretched incoherence and inconsistency there is between the faculties of the corrupt un sanctified soul, that it is possible for men to acknowledge that Christ is that prophet, and yet turn a deaf ear to him.

15. ¶ When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king he departed again into a mountain himself alone. 16. And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea. 17. And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. 18. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. 19. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. 20. But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. 21. Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

Here is, 1. Christ's retirement from the multitude.

1. Observe, What induced him to retire? because he perceived that they who acknowledged him to be that prophet that should come into the world, would come and take him by force and make him a king, *ver. 15.* Now here we have an instance,

(1.) Of the irregular zeal of some of Christ's followers, nothing would serve but they would make him a king.

Now, 1. This was an *act of zeal* for the honour of Christ, and against the contempt which the ruling part of the Jewish church put upon him. They were concerned to see so great a benefactor to the world so little esteemed of in it, and therefore, since royal titles are counted the most illustrious, they would make him a king, knowing that the Messiah was to be a king; and if a prophet like Moses, then a sovereign prince and lawgiver

like him; and if they cannot set him up upon the holy hill of Zion, a mountain in Galilee shall serve for the present. Those whom Christ has feasted with the royal dainties of heaven, should in return for his favour make him their king, and set him upon the throne in their souls; let him that has fed us, rule us. But, 2. It was an *irregular zeal*; for, 1. It was grounded upon a mistake, concerning the nature of Christ's kingdom, as if it were to be of this world; and he must appear with outward pomp, a crown on his head, and an army at his foot, such a king as this they make him, which was as great a disarrangement to his glory, as it would be to lacker gold, or paint a ruby. Right notions of Christ's kingdom would keep us to right methods for the advancing of it. 2. It was excited by the love of the flesh; they would make him their king who could feed them so plentifully without their toil, and save them from the curse of *earning their bread in the sweat of their face*. 3. It was intended to carry on a *secular design*; they hoped this might be a fair opportunity of shaking off the Roman yoke, which they were weary of. If they had one to head them who could victual an army cheaper than another could provide for a family, they were sure of the sinews of the war, and could not fail of success, and the recovery of their ancient liberty. Thus is religion often prostituted to a secular interest, and Christ is served only to serve in turn, Rom. xvi. 18. *Vix queritur Jesus propter Jesum, sed propter alium*, August. Nay, 4. It was a tumultuous, seditious attempt, and a disturber of the public peace; it would make the country a seat of war, and expose it to the resentments of the Roman power. 5. It was contrary to the mind of our Lord Jesus himself; for they would take him by force whether he would or no. Note, Those who force honours upon Christ which he has not required at their hands, displease him and do him the greatest dishonour. They that say, *I am of Christ*, in opposition to those that are of Apollon and Cephas, so making Christ the head of a party take him by force to make him a king, contrary to his own mind.

(2.) Here is an instance of the humility and self-denial of the Lord Jesus, that when they would have him made king, he departed; so far was he from countenancing the design, that he effectually quashed it. Herein he has left a testimony, (1.) Against ambition and affectation of worldly honour, to which he was perfectly mortified, and has taught us to be so. Had they come to take him by force and make him a prisoner, he could not have been more indignant to abscond than he was when they would make him a king. Let not us then covet to be the *idols of the crowd*, nor be desirous of vain glory. (2.) Against faction and sedition, treason and rebellion, and whatever tends to disturb the peace of kings and provinces. By this it appears, he was no enemy to Caesar, nor would have his followers be so, but the *quies in the land*; that he would have his ministers decline every thing that looks like sedition, or looks towards it, and improve their interest only for their works like.

2. Observe, whether he retired, he departed again into a mountain, *ver. 15.* into the mountain, the mountain where he had preached, *ver. 3.* whence he came down into the plain to feed the people, and then returned to it alone to be private. Christ though so useful in the places of concourse, yet chose sometimes to be alone, to teach us to sequester ourselves from the world now and then, for the more free converse with God and our own souls, and never left alone, faith the serious Christian, than when alone. Public services must not juggle our private devotions.

2. Here is the disciples distressed at sea. They that go down to the sea in ships, these see the works of the Lord; for he raiseth the stormy wind, Psal. cvii. 23. Apply that to these disciples.

1. Here is their going down to the sea, in a ship, *ver. 16, 17.* When even was come, and they had done their day's work, it was time to look homeward, and therefore they went abroad, and set sail for Capernaum. This they did by particular directions from their Master, (with design as it should seem to get them out of the way of temptation,) of countenancing those that would have made him a king.

2. Here is the stormy wind arising, and fulfilling the word of God. They were Christ's disciples, and were now in the way of their duty, and Christ was now in the mount praying for them, and yet in this distress. The perils and afflictions of this present time may very well consist with one interest in Christ and his intercession. They had lately been feasted at Christ's table, but after the sun-shine of comfort expect a storm. (1.) *It was now dark*, this made the storm the more dangerous and uncomfortable. Sometimes the people of God are in trouble, and cannot see their way out; in the dark concerning the cause of their trouble, concerning the design and tendency of it, and what the issue will be. (2.) *Jesus was not come to them*. When they were in that storm, Matt. viii. 21. *Jesus was with them*, but now their beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone. The absence of Christ is the great aggravation of the troubles of Christians. (3.) *The sea arose by reason of a great wind*. It was calm and fair when they put to sea; they were not so presumptuous as to launch out in a storm, but it arose when they were at sea. In times of tranquillity we must prepare for trouble, for it may arise when we little think of it. Let it comfort good people, when they happen to be in storms at sea, that the disciples of Christ were so; and let the promises of a gracious God balance the threats of an angry sea; though in a storm, and in the dark, so were Christ's disciples. Clouds and darkness sometimes surround the children of the light, and of the day.

3. Here is Christ's sea-mable approach to them when they were in this peril, *ver. 19.* They had rowed (being forced by the contrary winds to betake themselves to their oars) about twenty-five or thirty furlongs. The holy spirit that indited this, could have ascertained the number of furlongs precisely, but that being only circumstantial, that is left to be expressed according to the conjecture of the Penman. And when they were got off a goosh way at sea, they see Jesus walking on the sea. See here, (1.) The power Christ has over the laws and customs of nature, to controul and dispense with them at his pleasure. It is natural for heavy bodies to sink in water, but Christ walked upon the water, as upon dry land, which was more than Moses's dividing the water, and walking through the water. (2.) The concern Christ has for his disciples in distress, he drew nigh to the ship; for therefore he walked upon the water, as he rides upon the heavens for the help of his people, Deut. xxxiii. 26. He will not leave them comfortless when they seem to be tossed with tempest, and not comforted. When they are banished, as John, into remote places, or shut up as Paul and Silas in close places, he will find access to them, and will be nigh them. (2.) The relief Christ gives to his disciples in their fears. They were afraid, more afraid of an apparition (for so they supposed him to be) than of the winds and waves. It is more terrible to wrestle with the rulers of the darkness of this world, than with a tempestuous sea. When they thought a demon haunted them, and perhaps was instrumental to raise the storm, they were more terrified than they had been while they saw nothing in it but what was natural. Note, 1. Our real distresses are much increased by our imaginary ones, the creatures of our own fancy. 2. Even the approaches of comfort and deliverance are often so mixt with darkness as to become the occasions of fear and perplexity. We are often not only worse frightened than hurt, but then most frightened when we are ready to be helped. But when they were in this fright, how affectionately did Christ silence their fears with that compassionate word, *ver. 20.* *It is I, be not afraid*. Nothing more

more powerful to convince sinners than that word, *I am Jesus whom thou hast crucified*; nothing more powerful to comfort saints than this, *I am Jesus whom thou lovest*; it is I that love thee, and seek thy good; be not afraid of me, no nor of the storm; when trouble is nigh, Christ is nigh.

4. Here is their speedy arrival at the port they were bound for, ver. 17. (1.) They welcomed Christ into the ship; they willingly received him. Note, Christ's abiding himself for a time, is but so much the more to *endear himself* at his return to his disciples, that value his presence above any thing; see Cant. iii. 4. (2.) Christ landed them safe at the shore; immediately the ship was at the land whither they went. Note, 1. The ship of the church, in which the disciples of Christ have embarked themselves and their all, may be much shattered and distressed, yet it shall come safe to the harbour at last; tossed at sea, but not lost; cast down, but not destroyed; the bath burning but not consumed. 2. The power and presence of the church's king, shall expedite and facilitate her deliverance, and conquer the difficulties which have baffled the skill and industry of all her other friends. The disciples had rowed hard, but could not make their point till they had got Christ in the ship, and then the work was done suddenly. If we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, have received him willingly, though the night be dark, and the wind high, yet we may comfort ourselves with this, we shall be at shore shortly, and are nearer to it than we think we are. Many a doubting soul is fetched to heaven by a pleasing surprise, or ever it is aware.

22. ¶ The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone: 23. (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias, nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the LORD had given thanks;) 24. When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. 25. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? 26. Jesus answered them, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. 27. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

In these verses we have,

First, the careful enquiry which the people made after Christ, ver. 23. 24. They saw the disciples go to sea, they saw Christ retire to the mountain, probably with an intimation that he desired to be private for some time; but their hearts being set upon it to make him a king, they way-laid his return; and the day following, the hot fire of their zeal still continuing,

1. They are here much at a loss for him: he was gone, and they wot not what was become of him; they saw there was no other boat there, but that in which the disciples went off, providence so ordering it for the confirming of the miracle of his walking on the sea, for there was no boat for him to go in. They observed also that Jesus did not go with his disciples, but they went off alone, and had left him among them on their side of the water. Note, Those that would find Christ must diligently observe all his motions, and learn to understand the tokens of his presence and absence that they may seek accordingly.

They are very industrious in seeking him. They searched the places thereabouts, and when they saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, neither he nor any one that could give tidings of him, they resolved to search elsewhere. Note, Those that would find Christ, must accomplish a diligent search; must seek till they find; must go from sea to sea to seek the word of God, rather than live without it. And those whom Christ has feasted with the bread of life, should have their souls carried out in earnest desires towards him. Much would have more in communion with Christ. Now, 1. They resolved to go to Capernaum in quest of him; there was his head quarters, where he usually resided. Thither his disciples were gone, and they knew he would not be long absent from them; they that would find Christ, must go forth by the footsteps of the flock. 2. Providence favoured them with an opportunity of going thither by sea, which was the speediest way; for there came other boats from Tiberias, that lay further off upon the same shore, nigh, though not so nigh to the place where they did eat bread, in which they might soon make a trip to Capernaum, and probably the boats were bound for that port. Note, Those that in sincerity seek Christ, and seek opportunities of converse with him, are commonly owned and assisted by providence in those pursuits. The evangelist having occasion to mention their eating the multiplied bread, adds, after that the Lord had given thanks, ver. 11. So much were the disciples affected with their master's giving thanks, that they can never forget the impressions made upon them by it, but took a pleasure in remembering the gracious words that then proceeded out of his mouth. That was the grace and beauty of that meal, and made it remarkable; their hearts burned within them.

3. They laid hold on the opportunity that offered itself, and they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. They did not defer in hopes to see him again on this side the water; but their convictions being strong and their desires warm, they followed him presently. Good motions are often crushed, and come to nothing, for want of being prosecuted in time. They came to Capernaum, and for aught appears those unsound hypocritical followers of Christ had a calm and pleasant passage, while his sincere disciples had a rough and stormy one. It is not strange if it fare worst with the best men in this evil world. They came seeking Jesus. Note, Those that would find Christ, and find comfort in him, must be willing to take pains, and as those here, compass sea and land to seek and serve him who came from heaven to earth to seek and save us.

Secondly, The success of this inquiry, ver. 25. They found him on the other side of the sea. Note, Christ will be found of those that seek him, first or last; and it is worth while to cross a sea, nay to go from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, to seek Christ, if we may but find him at last. Those people appeared afterwards to be unsound, and not acted by any good principle, and yet were thus zealous. Note, Hypocrites may be very forward in their attendance on God's ordinances. If men have no more to shew for their love to Christ, but only their running after sermons and

prayers, and their pangs or affection to good preaching, they have reason to suspect themselves no better than this *eager crowd*. But though these people were no better principled, and Christ knew it, yet he was willing to be found of them, and admitted them into fellowship with him; if we could know the hearts of hypocrites, yet while their profession is plausible we must not exclude them our communion, much less when we do not.

Thirdly, The question they put to him when they found him, *Rabbi, when camest thou thither?* It should seem by ver. 59. that they found him in the synagogue. They knew that was the likeliest place to find Christ in, for it was his custom to attend public assemblies for religious worship, Luke iv. 16. Note, Christ must be sought, and will be found in the congregations of his people, and in the administration of his ordinances; public worship is what Christ chooses to own, and grace with his presence and the manifestations of himself. There they found him, and all they had to say to him was, *Rabbi, when camest thou hither?* They saw he would not be made a king, and therefore say no more of that, but call him Rabbi, their teacher. Their enquiry refers not only to the time, but to the manner of his conveying himself thither, not only when, but how camest thou hither, for there was no boat for him to come in. They were curious in asking concerning Christ's motions but not solicitous to observe their own.

Fourthly, The answer Christ gave them, not direct to their question. What was it to them, when and how he came thither? but such an answer as their case required.

1. He discovers the corrupt principle that they acted from in their following of him, ver. 26. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, I that search the heart and know what is in man, I the Amen the faithful witness, Rev. iii. 14, 15, ye seek me, that is well, but it is not from a good principle; Christ knows not only what we do, but why we do it.* These followed Christ, 1. Not for his doctrine's sake; not because ye saw the miracles. The miracles were the great confirmation of his doctrine, Nicodemus sought for him for the sake of them, John iii. 2. and argued from the power of his works to the truth of his word; but these here were so stupid and mindless, that they never considered that. But, 2. It was for their own bellies' sake, because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled; not because he taught them, but because he fed them. He had given them, 1. A full meal's meat, they did eat, and were filled; and some of them perhaps were so poor, that they had not known of a long time before now, what it was to have their bellies full, to eat and leave. 2. A dainty meal's meat; it is probable as the miraculous wine was the best wine, so was the miraculous food, more than ordinary pleasant. 3. A cheap meal's meat, that cost them nothing, no reckoning brought in. Note, Many follow Christ for loaves and not for love. Thus they do who aim at secular advantages in their profession of religion, and follow it, because by this craft they got their preferments: *Quanti profuit nobis hæc fabula de Christo*, said one of the Popes: these people complimented Christ with Rabbi, and shewed him great respect, yet he told them thus faithfully of their hypocrisy; his ministers must hence learn not to flatter those that flatter them, nor to be bribed by fair words, but to give faithful reproofs where there is cause for them; nor cry peace to all that cry rabbi to them.

2. He directs them to better principles, ver. 27. *Labour for that meat that endureth unto everlasting life.* He had discoursed with the woman of Samaria, under the similitude of water, here he speaks of the same things under the similitude of meat, taking occasion from the loaves they had eaten. His design is,

1. To moderate our worldly pursuits. *Labour not for the meat that perisheth.* This doth not forbid honest labour for food convenient, 2 Thess. iii. 12. But we must not make the things of this world our chief care and concern. Note, 1. The things of this world are meat that perisheth. Worldly wealth, honour and pleasure, these are meat, they feed the fancy, and many times that is all, and fill the belly, things which men hunger after as meat, and glut themselves with, and which a carnal heart as long as they last may make a shift to live upon; but they perish, are of a perishing nature, wither of themselves, and are exposed to a thousand accidents; those that have the largest share of them, are not sure to have them while they live, but are sure to leave them and lose them when they die. 2. It is therefore folly for us inordinately to labour after them. 1. We must not labour in religion, nor work the works thereof, for this perishing meat, with an eye to this, must not make our religion subservient to a worldly interest, nor aim at secular advantage in sacred exercises. 2. We must not at all labour for this meat; that is, we must not make these perishing things our chief good, nor make our care and pains about them our chief business; nor seek those things first and most, Prov. xxiii. 45.

2. To quicken and excite our gracious pursuits: bestow your pains to better purpose, and labour for that meat which belongs to the soul. Of which he shews,

1. That it is unspeakably desirable; it is meat which endures to everlasting life; it is a happiness which will last as long as we must, which not only itself endures eternally, but will nourish us up to everlasting life. The blessings of the new covenant are our preparative for eternal life, our pre-servative to it, and the pledge and earnest of it.

2. It is undoubtedly attainable. Shall all the treasures of the world be ransacked, and all the fruits of the earth gathered together to furnish us with provisions that will last to eternity? No, *The sea saith it is not in me; among all the treasures hid in the sand, it cannot be gotten for gold; but it is that which the Son of man shall give; no dove, either which meat or which life the Son of man shall give.* Observe here, 1. Who gives this meat; the Son of man, the great householder and master of the stores, who is intrusted with the administration of the kingdom of God among men, and the dispensation of the gifts, graces, and comforts of that kingdom, and has power to give eternal life, with all the means of it, and preparations for it. We are bid to labour for it, as if it were to be got by our own industry, and sold upon that valuable consideration, as the heathen said, *Dii laboribus omnia vendunt*. But when we have laboured never so much for it, we have not merited it as our hire, but the Son of man gives it. And what more free than gift? It is an encouragement that he who has the giving of it is the Son of man, for then we may hope the Sons of men that seek it, and labour for it, shall not fail to have it. 2. What authority he has to give it; for him hath God the Father sealed, *ταύτην γὰρ ὁ Πατήρ σφραγισεν, ὁ Θεός, for him the Father hath sealed* (i. e. proved and evidenced) to be God; so some read it; he has declared him to be the Son of God with power. He hath sealed him, i. e. hath given him full authority to deal between God and man, as God's ambassador to man, and man's intercessor with God; and has proved his commission by miracles; having given him authority, he hath given us assurance of it; having intrusted him with unlimited powers, he hath satisfied us with undoubted proofs of them; so that he might go on with confidence in his undertaking for us, so may we in our resignation to him. God the Father sealed him with the Spirit that rested on him, by the voice from heaven, by the testimony he bore to him in signs and wonders. Divine Revelation is perfected in him, in him the vision and prophecy is sealed up, Dan. ix. 24. to him all believers seal that he is true, John iii. 33. and in him they are all sealed, 2 Cor. i. 22.

28. Then

28. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? 29. Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. 30. They said therefore unto him, what sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? 31. Our fathers did eat manna in the desert: as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. 32. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. 33. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. 34. Then said they unto him, LORD, evermore give us this bread. 35. And Jesus said unto them I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. 36. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me and believe not. 37. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 38. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. 41. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. 42. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? 43. Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. 44. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. 46. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God he hath seen the Father, 47. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life. 48. I am that bread of life, 49. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. 52. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? 53. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. 59. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

Whether this conference was with Capernaïtes, in whose synagogue Christ now was, or with those who came from the other side of the sea, is not certain, nor material: however, it is an instance of Christ's condescension, that he gave them leave to ask him questions, and did not resent the interruption as an affront; no not from his common hearers, though not his immediate followers. Those that would be apt to teach, must be swift to hear, and study to answer. It is the wisdom of teachers, when they are asked even impertinent, unprofitable questions, from thence to take occasion to answer that which is profitable, that the question may be rejected but not the querist.

Now, 1. Christ having told them that *they must work for the meat* he spoke of, must labour for it, they enquire what work they must do, and he answers them, *ver. 28, 29.*

1. Their enquiry is *pertinent* enough, *ver. 21. What shall we do that we may work the works of God.* Some understand it as a pert question, what works of God can we do more and better, than those we do in obedience to the law of Moses? but I rather take it as a humble serious question, speaking them to be at least for the present in a good mind, and willing to know and do their duty; and I take it that they who asked this question how and what, *ver. 30.* and made that request, *ver. 34.* were not the same persons with those that murmured, *ver. 41, 42.* and strove, *ver. 52.* for those are expressly called *the Jews*, which came out of Judea, (for those were strictly called Jews) to cavil, whereas these were of Galilee, and came to be taught. This question here intimates, that they were convinced, that they who would obtain this everlasting meat; (1.) They must aim to do

something great. They that *look high* in their expectations and hope to enjoy the *glory of God*, must *aim high* in those endeavours, and study to *do the works of God*, works which he requires and will accept of, *works of God* distinguished from the works of worldly men in their worldly pursuits. It is not enough to speak the words of God, but we must do the works of God. (2.) That they must be willing to do any thing. *What shall we do?* Lord, I am ready to do whatever thou appointest, though never so displeasing to flesh and blood, *Acts ix. 6.*

2. Christ's answer was plain enough, *ver. 29. This is the work of God that ye believe.* Note, 1. The work of faith is the work of God. They enquire after the *works of God*, in the plural number, being careful about *many things*; but Christ directs them to one work which includes all, the one thing needful, that *ye believe*, which supercedes all the works of the ceremonial law; the work which is necessary to the acceptance of all the other works, and which produceth them, for without faith you cannot please God. It is *God's work*; for it is of his *working in us*, it subjects the soul to his working on us, and quickens the soul in working *for him*. 2. That faith is the work of God, which closeth with Christ, and relies upon him. It is to *believe on him* as one whom God hath sent, as God's commissioner in the great affair of peace between God and man, and as such to *rest* upon him, and *resign ourselves* to him. See *John xiv. 1.*

2. Christ having told them that the Son of man would give them this meat, they enquire concerning him, and he answers their enquiry.

1. Their enquiry is after a *sign*, *ver. 30. What sign shewest thou?* Thus far they were right, that since he required them to give him *credit*, he should produce his *credentials*, and make it out by miracle that he was the Son of God. Moses having confirmed his mission by *signs*, it was requisite that Christ, who came to set aside the ceremonial law, should in like manner confirm his. *What dost thou work?* What dost thou drive at? What lasting characters of a divine power dost thou design to leave upon thy doctrine? But herein they missed it. (1.) That they overlooked the many miracles which they had seen wrought by him, and which amounted to an abundant proof of his divine mission; Is this a time of day to ask what sign sheweth thou, especially at Capernaum, the *staple of miracles*, where he had done so many mighty works, *signs* so significant of his office and undertaking? Were not these very persons but the other day miraculously fed by him. None so blind as they that will not see, for they may be so blind as to question whether it be day or no, when the sun shines in their faces. (2.) That they preferred the miraculous feeding of Israel in the wilderness before all the miracles Christ wrought, *ver. 31. Our fathers did eat manna in the desert*, and to strengthen the objection, they quoted scripture for it, he gave them bread from heaven, taken from *Psal. lxxviii. He gave them of the corn of heaven.* What a good use might be made of this story which they here refer to! It was a memorable instance of God's power and goodness, often mentioned to the glory of God, *Neh. ix. 20, 21*, yet see how these people perverted it, and made an ill use of it.

1. Christ reproved them for their fondness of the miraculous bread, and bid them not set their hearts upon meat which *perisheth*; Why, say they, meat for the belly was the great good thing that God gave to our fathers in the desert, and why should not we then labour for that meat? If God made much of them, why should not we be for those that will make much of us.

2. Christ had fed five thousand men with five loaves, and had given them that as one sign to prove him *sent of God*; but under colour of *magnifying* the miracles of Moses, they tacitly *under-value* that miracle of Christ, and evade the evidence of it. Christ fed his thousands, but Moses his hundred thousands: Christ fed them but once, and then reproved those who followed him in hope to be still fed, and put them off with a discourse of spiritual food; but Moses fed his followers forty years, and miracles were not their rarities, but their daily bread; Christ fed them with bread out of the earth, barley bread, and fishes out of the sea; but Moses fed Israel with bread from heaven, angels food. Thus big did the Jews talk of the manna which their fathers did eat, but their fathers had slighted it as much as they did now the barley loaves, and called it *light bread*, *Numb. xxi. 5.* Thus apt are we to slight and overlook the advantages of God's power and grace in our own times, while we pretend to admire the wonders which our fathers told us of. Suppose this miracle of Christ was outdone by that of Moses, yet there were other instances in which Christ's miracles outshone his; and beside, all true miracles prove a divine doctrine, though not equally illustrious in the circumstances, which were ever diversified according as the occasion did require. As much as the manna excelled the barley loaves, so much and much more did the doctrine of Christ excel the law of Moses, and his heavenly institutions the cardinal ordinances of that dispensation.

2. Here is Christ's reply to this enquiry; wherein.

1. He rectifies their mistake concerning the *typical manna*. It was true, their fathers did eat manna in the desert. But, 1. It was not Moses that gave it them, nor were they obliged to him for it: he was but the instrument, and therefore they must look beyond him to God. We do not find that Moses did so much as pray to God for the manna, and he spoke unadvisedly when he said, *must we fetch water out of the rock?* for Moses gave them not either that bread or that water. 2. It was not given them as they imagined from heaven, from the highest heavens, but only from the clouds, and therefore not so much excelling that which had its rise from the earth, as they thought. Because the scripture saith he gave them bread from heaven, it doth not follow that it was *heavenly bread*, or was intended to be the nourishment of souls. Misunderstanding scripture language occasions many mistakes in the things of God.

2. He informs them concerning the true manna, of which that was a type. *But my father giveth you the true bread from heaven*, that which is truly and properly the bread from heaven, of which that was but a shadow and figure is now given, not to your fathers who are dead and gone, but to you of this present age, for whom the better things were reserved: He is now giving you that bread from heaven which is truly so called: As much as the throne of God's glory is above the clouds of the air, so much doth the spiritual bread of the everlasting gospel excel the manna. In calling God his father, he speaks himself greater than Moses; for Moses was faithful but as a servant, Christ as a son, *Heb. iii. 5.*

Now this objection of theirs concerning the manna, gave further occasion to Christ to discourse of himself under the similitude of bread, and of believing under the similitude of eating and drinking, to which, together with his putting of both together in the eating of his flesh, and drinking of his blood, together with the remarks made upon it by the hearers, the rest of this conference may be reduced.

First, Christ having spoken of himself as the great gift of God, and the true bread, *ver. 32.* largely explains and confirms this; that we may rightly know him.

1. He here shews that he is the true bread, this he repeats again and again, *ver. 33—48, 49, 50, 51.* Observe,

1. That Christ is bread; is that to the soul which bread is to the body, nourisheth and supporteth the spiritual life, as the staff of it, as bread doth

the bodily life; it is the *staff of life*. The doctrine of the gospel concerning Christ; that he is the mediator between God and man, that he is our peace, our righteousness, our redeemer; *by these things do men live*. Our bodies could better live without food, than our souls without Christ. *Bread-corn is bruised*, Isa. xxviii. 28. so was Christ; he was born at Bethlehem, the *house of bread*, and typified by the *shew-bread*.

2. That he is the *bread of God*, ver. 33. divine bread; it is he that is of God, ver. 46. bread which my Father gives, ver. 32. which he has made to be the food of our souls; the bread of God's family, his *children's bread*. The Levitical sacrifices are called the *bread of God*, Lev. xxi. 21, 22. and Christ is the great sacrifice; Christ in his word and ordinances the *feast upon the sacrifice*.

3. That he is the *bread of life*, ver. 35. and again, ver. 48. *that bread of life*, alluding to the tree of life in the midst of the garden of Eden, which was to Adam the seal of that part of the covenant, *do this and live*, of which he might eat and live. Christ is the bread of life, for he is the fruit of the tree of life. (1.) He is the *living bread*, so he explains himself, ver. 51. *I am the living bread*. Bread is itself a dead thing, and nourisheth not but by the help of the faculties of a living body; but Christ is himself *living bread*, and nourisheth by his own power. Manna was a dead thing, if kept but one night it putrefied and bred worms; but Christ is ever living, everlasting bread, that never moulds or waxeth old. The doctrine of Christ crucified, is now as strengthening and comforting to a believer as it ever was, and his mediation still of as much value and efficacy as ever. (2.) He gives life unto the world, ver. 33. spiritual and eternal life; the life of the soul in union and communion with God here, and in the vision and fruition of him hereafter; a life that includes in it all happiness. The manna did only preserve and support life, did not preserve and perpetuate life, much less restore it; but Christ gives life to those that were dead in sin. The manna was ordained only for the life of the Israelites, but Christ is given for the *life of the world*; none are excluded from the benefit of this bread, but such as exclude themselves. Christ came to put life into the minds of men; principles productive of acceptable performances.

4. That he is the *bread which came down from heaven*; this is often repeated here, ver. 33—50, 51—58. This notes, (1.) The divinity of Christ's person. As God he had a being in heaven, from whence he came to take our nature upon him; *I came down from heaven*, from whence we may infer his antiquity, he was in the beginning with God; his ability, for heaven is the firmament of power; and his authority, he came with a divine commission. (2.) The divine original of all that good which flows to us through him. He cometh, not only *as a Giver*, ver. 51. but *as a Giver*, he is descending, noting a constant communication of light, life, and love from God to believers through Christ, as the manna descended daily; see Eph. i. 3. *Omnia desuper*.

3. That he is *that bread*, of which the manna was a type and figure, ver. 58. *that bread*, the true bread, ver. 32. As the rock that they drank of was Christ, so was the manna they eat of *spiritual bread*, 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. Manna was given to Israel, so Christ to the spiritual Israel. There was manna enough for them all, so in Christ a fullness of grace for all believers; he that gathers much of this manna, will have none to spare when he comes to use it; and he that gathers little, when his grace comes to be perfected in glory, shall find that *he has no lack*. Manna was to be gathered in the morning, and those that would find Christ must seek him early. Manna was sweet, and as the author of the *Wisdom of Solomon* tells us, chap. xvi. 20. was agreeable to every palate: and to them that believe Christ is precious. Israel lived upon manna till they came to Canaan; and Christ is our life. There was a memorial of the manna preserved in the ark, so of Christ in the Lord's-supper, as the food of souls.

2. He here shews what his undertaking was, and what his errand into the world. Laying aside the metaphor, he speaks plainly, and speaks no proverb, giving us an account of his business among men, ver. 38, 39, 40.

1. He assures us in general that he came from heaven upon his Father's business, ver. 38. *not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him*. He came from heaven, which speaks him an intelligent active being who voluntarily descended to this lower world, a long journey, and a great step downwards, considering the glories of the world he came from, and the calamities of the world he came to; we may well ask with wonder, what moved him to such an expedition? And here he tells us, he did not come to do his own will, but the will of his Father; not that he had any will that stood in competition with the will of his Father, but they to whom he spoke suspected he might; no, saith he, my own will is not the spring I act from, nor the rule I go by, but I am come to do the will of him that sent me. That is, 1. Christ did not come into the world as a private person, that acts for himself only, but under a public character, to act for others as an ambassador or plenipotentiary, authorised by a public commission; he came into the world as God's great agent, and the world's great physician. It was not any business that brought him hither, but he came to settle affairs between parties, no less considerable than the great Creator, and the whole creation. 2. Christ when he was in the world, did not carry on any private design, nor had any separate interest at all, distinct from theirs for whom he acted. The scope of his whole life was to glorify God, and do good to men; he therefore never consulted his own ease, safety, or quiet, but when he was to lay down his life, though he had a human nature, which started at it, he set aside the consideration of that, and resolved his will as man into the will of God; *not as I will, but as thou wilt*.

2. He acquaints us in particular with that will of the Father which he came to do; he here declares the decree, the instructions he was to pursue.

1. The private instructions given to Christ that he should be sure to save all the chosen remnant; and this is the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son, ver. 38. *This is the Father's will which hath sent me*; this is the charge I am intrusted with, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose none.

Note, (1.) There is a certain number of the children of men, given by the Father to Jesus Christ to be his care, and so to be to him for a name and a praise; given him for an inheritance, for a possession. Let him do all that for them which their case requires; teach them and heal them, pay their debt, and plead their cause, prepare them for, and preserve them to eternal life, and then let him make his best of them. The Father might dispose of them as he pleased: as creatures, their lives and beings were derived from him; as sinners, their lives and beings were forfeited to him; he might have sold them for the satisfaction of his justice, and delivered them to the tormentors; but he pitched upon them to be the monuments of his mercy, and delivered them to the Saviour. Those whom God chose to be the objects of his special love, he lodged as a trust in the hands of Christ.

(2.) Jesus Christ has undertaken that he will lose none of those that were thus given him of the Father. The many sons whom he was to bring to glory shall all be forthcoming, and none of them missing, Matt. xviii. 14. None of them shall be lost for want of a sufficient price to purchase them, or sufficient grace to sanctify them. *If I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, let me bear the blame for ever*, Gen. xliii. 9.

(3.) Christ's undertaking for those that are given him extends to the resurrection of their bodies, *I will raise it up again at the last day*; which supposeth all that goes before, but this to crown and complete the undertaking; the body is a part of the man, and therefore a part of Christ's purchase and charge; it pertains to the promises, and therefore it should not be lost. The undertaking is not only that he shall lose none, no person, but that he shall lose nothing, no part of the person, and therefore not the body. Christ's undertaking will never be accomplished till the resurrection, when the souls and bodies of the saints shall be re-united and gathered to Christ, that he may present them to the Father; *behold I, and the children that thou hast given me*, Heb. ii. 13. 2 Tim. i. 12.

(4.) The spring and original of all this, is the *sovereign will of God*; the counsels of his will, according to which he worketh all this. This was the commandment he gave to his Son, when he sent him into the world, and to which the Son always had an eye.

2. The public instructions which were to be given to the children of men, in what way, and upon what terms, they might obtain salvation by Christ; and this is the covenant of grace between God and man. Who the particular persons were that were given to Christ is a secret, *the Lord knows them that are his*, we do not, nor is it fit we should; but though their names are concealed their characters are published. An offer is made of life and happiness upon gospel terms, that by it those that were given to Christ might be brought to him, and others left inexcusable, ver. 40. *this is the will*, the revealed will of him that sent me; the method agreed upon, upon which to proceed with the children of men, that every one, Jew or Gentile, that sees the Son, and believes on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up. This is gospel indeed, good news.

Is it not reviving to hear this? 1. That eternal life may be had, if it be not our own fault. That whereas upon the sin of the first Adam the way of the tree of life was blocked up, by the grace of the second Adam it is laid open again: The crown of glory is set before us as the prize of our high calling, which we may run for and obtain. 2. Every one may have it. This gospel is to be preached, this offer made to all, and none can say, it belongs not to me, Rev. xxii. 17. 3. This everlasting life is fore to all those who believe in Christ, and to them only. He that sees the Son, and believes on him, shall be saved. Some understand this seeing as a limitation of this condition of salvation to those only that have the revelation of Christ and his grace made to them. Every one that has the opportunity of being acquainted with Christ, and improves that so well as to believe in him, shall have everlasting life, so that none shall be condemned for unbelief, however they may be for other sins, but those who have had the gospel preached to them, who like the Jews here, ver. 36. have seen, and yet have not believed; have known Christ, and yet not trusted in him. But I rather understand seeing, here to mean the same thing with believing, for it is *seeing*, which signifies not so much the sight of the eye (as ver. 36. *ὁπώραν με*) as the contemplation of the mind. Every one that sees the Son, that is, believes on him, sees him with an eye of faith, by which we come to be duly acquainted and affected with the doctrine of the gospel concerning him. It is to look upon him, as the stung Israelites upon the brazen serpent. It is not a blind faith that Christ requires, that we should be willing to have our eyes put out, and then follow him, but that we should see him, and see what ground we go upon in our faith. It is then right, when it is not taken up upon hear-say, believing as the church believes, but is the result of a due consideration of, and insight into, the motives of credibility: *Now mine eyes see thee: we have heard him ourselves*. 4. Those who believe in Jesus Christ, in order to their having everlasting life, shall be raised up by his power at the last day. He had it in charge as his Father's will, ver. 39. and here he solemnly makes it his own undertaking, *I will raise him up*, which signifies not only the return of the body to life, but the putting of the whole man into a full possession of the eternal life promised.

Now Christ discoursing thus concerning himself, as the bread of life that came down from heaven, let us see what remarks his hearers made upon it.

1. What they heard of such a thing as the bread of God, which gives life, they heartily prayed for it, ver. 54. *Lord, ever-more give us this bread*. I cannot think that this is spoken scoffingly, and in a way of derision, as most interpreters understand it; give us such bread as this if thou canst; let us be fed with it not for one meal, as with the five loaves, but ever-more, as if this were no better a prayer than that of the impenitent thief, *If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us*. But I take this request to be made, though ignorantly, yet honestly, and to be well meant; for they call him Lord, and desire a share in what he gives, whatever he means by it. General and confused notions of divine things, produce in carnal hearts some kind of desire towards them, and wishes of them; take Balaam's wish, to die the death of the righteous. Those who have an indistinct knowledge of the things of God, who see men as trees walking, make as I may call them *inarticulate prayers for spiritual blessings*. They think the favour of God a good thing, and heaven a fine place, and cannot but wish them their own, while they have no value or desire at all for that holiness which is necessary both to the one and to the other. Let this be the desire of our souls; have we tasted that the Lord is gracious, been feasted with the word of God, and Christ in the word: Let us say, *Lord, ever-more give us this bread*: Let the bread of life be our daily bread, the heavenly manna our continual feast, and let us never know the want of it.

2. But when they understood, that by this bread of life Jesus meant himself, they then despised it. Whether they were the same persons that had prayed for it, ver. 34. or some others of the company doth not appear; it seems to be some others, for they are called Jews. Now it is said, ver. 41. they murmured at him. This comes in immediately after that solemn declaration Christ had made of God's will, and his own undertaking concerning man's salvation, ver. 39, 40, which certainly were some of the most weighty and gracious words that ever proceeded out of the mouth of our Lord Jesus, the most faithful, and best worthy of all acceptance; one would think, that like Israel in Egypt, when they heard that God had thus visited them, they should have bowed their heads and worshipped; but on the contrary, instead of closing with the offer made them, they murmured, quarrelled with what Christ said; and though they did not openly oppose and contradict it, yet they privately whispered among themselves in contempt of it, and instilled into one another's minds prejudices against it. Many that will not professedly contradict the doctrine of Christ, their evils are so weak and groundless, that they are either ashamed to own them, or afraid to have them silenced, yet say in their heart, they do not like it.

Now, 1. That which offended them was Christ's asserting his original to be from heaven, ver. 41, 42. How is it that he saith, *I came down from heaven*? They had heard of angels coming down from heaven, but never of a man; overlooking the proofs he had given them of his being more than a man.

2. That which they thought justified them herein, was that they knew his extraction on earth; *Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know*? They took it heinously that he should say he came down from heaven when he was one of them. They speak slightly of his blessed name, *Jesus*, is not this Jesus? They take it for granted that Joseph

was really his father, though he was only *reputed* to be so. Note, Mistakes concerning the person of Christ, as if he were a mere man, conceived and born by ordinary generation, occasion the offence that is taken at his doctrine and offices. Those who set him on a level with other the sons of men, whose father and mother we know, no wonder if they derogate from the honour of his satisfaction, and the mysteries of his undertaking, and, like the Jews here, murmur at his promise to *raise us up at the last day*.

Secondly, Christ having spoken of faith as the great *work of God*, ver. 29, discoursing largely concerning this work, instructing and encouraging us in it,

1. He shews what it is to *believe in Christ*.

(1.) To believe in Christ, is to *come to Christ*; he that *comes to me*, is the same with him that *believes in me*, ver. 35. and again, ver. 37. *He that comes unto me*; so ver. 44, 45. Repentance towards God is *coming to him*, Jer. iii. 22. as our chief good and highest end; and so faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ is *coming to him* as our Prince and Saviour, and our way to the Father. It notes the out-goings of our affections towards him, for those are the motions of the soul, and actions agreeable; it is to *come off* from all those things that stand in opposition to him, or competition with him, and to *come up* to those terms upon which life and salvation are offered to us through him. When he was here on earth, it was more than barely coming where he was; so it is now, more than coming to his word and ordinances.

(2.) It is to *feed upon Christ*, ver. 51. *If any man eat of this bread*; the former notes applying ourselves to Christ, this notes applying Christ to ourselves, with appetite and delight, that we may receive life and strength, and comfort from him: *To feed on him* as the Israelites on the manna, having quitted the flesh-pots of Egypt, and not depending on the labour of their hands, to eat of that, but living purely on the bread given them from heaven.

2. He shews what is to be got by believing in Christ, what will he give us, if we *come to him*? What shall we be the better, if we *feed upon him*? *Want and death* are the chief things we dread; may we but be assured of the comforts of our being, and the continuance of it in the midst of those comforts, we have enough; now those two are here secured to true believers.

1. They shall never want, *never hunger, never thirst*, ver. 35. Desires they have, earnest desires, but these so suitably, so seasonably, so abundantly satisfied, that they cannot be called hunger and thirst, which is uneasy and painful. Those that did eat manna, and drank of the rock, hungered and thirsted afterwards: Manna surfeited them, water out of the rock failed them, but there is such an over-flowing fulness in Christ, as can never be *exhausted*, and such *over-flowing communications* from him, as can never be interrupted.

2. They shall *never die*, not die eternally; for, (1.) He that believeth on Christ *hath everlasting life*, ver. 37, he hath the assurance of it, the grant of it, the earnest of it; he has it in the promise and first fruits. Union with Christ and communion with God in Christ, is everlasting life begun. (2.) Whereas they that did eat manna died, Christ is such bread as a man may eat of and never die, ver. 49, 50. Observe here,

1. The insufficiency of the typical manna; *Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead*. There may be much good use made of the death of our fathers, their graves speak to us, and their monuments are our memorials, particularly of this, that the greatest plenty of the most dainty food, will neither prolong the thread of life, nor put by the stroke of death. Those that did eat manna, angels food, yet died like other men. There could be nothing amiss in their diet to shorten their days, nor could their deaths be hastened by the toils and fatigues of life, for they neither sowed nor reaped, and yet they died. (1.) Many of them died by the immediate strokes of God's vengeance for their unbelief and murmurings: for *though they did eat that spiritual meat*, yet with many of them God was not well pleased, but they were overthrown in the wilderness, 1 Cor. x. 3, 4, 5. Their eating manna was no security to them from the wrath of God, as believing in Christ is to us. (2.) The rest of them died in the course of nature, and their carcasses fell under a divine sentence, in that wilderness where they did eat manna. In that very age when miracles were *daily bread*, was the life of man reduced to the state it now stands at, as appears, Psalm xc. 10. Let them not boast of such manna then.

2. The all-sufficiency of the true manna, of which the other was a type: *This is the bread that cometh down from heaven*, the truly divine and heavenly food, that a man may eat thereof and not die, i. e. not fall under the wrath of God, which is killing to the soul; not die the second death; no, nor the first death finally and irrecoverably; not die, i. e. not perish, nor come short of the heavenly Canaan, as the Israelites did of the earthly, for want of faith, though they had manna.

This is further explained by that promise in the next words, *If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever*, ver. 53. This is the meaning of his *never dying*; though he go down to death, he shall pass through it to that world where there shall be no more death. To *live for ever*, is not to be for ever, (the damned in hell shall be for ever; the soul of man was made for an endless state) but to be happy for ever. And because the body must needs die, and be as water spilt upon the ground, Christ here undertakes for the gathering of that up too, as before, ver. 44. *I will raise him up at the last day*: and even that shall live for ever.

3. He shews what encouragements we have to believe in Christ. Christ here speaks of some who *had seen him, and yet believed not*, ver. 36. They saw his person and miracles, and heard him preach, and yet were not wrought up to believe in him. Faith is not always the effect of sight; the soldiers were eye-witnesses of his resurrection, and yet instead of believing in him, *belied him*; so that it is a difficult thing to bring people to believe in Christ: And by the operation of the Spirit of grace, those that *have not seen, yet have believed*.

Two things we are here assured of to encourage our faith.

1. That the Son will bid all those welcome that come to him, ver. 37. *Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out*. How welcome should this word be to our souls, which bids us welcome to Christ? *Him that comes*, it is in the singular number, speaking favour, not only to the body of believers in general, but to every particular soul that applies itself to Christ. Here, 1. The duty required is a pure gospel duty; to *come to Christ* that we may come to God by him. His beauty and love, those great attractives, must draw us to him; sense of need, and fear of danger, must drive us to him; any thing to bring us to Christ. 2. The promise is a pure gospel promise, *I will in no wise cast out*, *οὐ μὴ ἐκβάλω ἔξω*; there are two negatives, *I will not, no, I will not*. 1. Much favour is expressed here. We have reason to fear that he should cast us out; considering our meanness, our vileness, our unworthiness to come, our weakness in coming, we may justly expect that he should frown upon us, and shut his doors against us; but he obviates these fears with this assurance, he *will not* do it; will not disdain us though we are mean, will not reject us though we are sinful. Do poor scholars come to him to be taught? Though they be dull and slow he will not cast them out. Do poor patients come to him to be cured? Poor clients come to him to be advised? Though their case be bad, and though they come empty-

handed, he will *in no wise cast them out*. But, 2. More favour is implied than is expressed; when it is said he will not cast them out, the meaning is, he will receive them, and entertain them, and give them all that which they come to him for: As he will not refuse them at their first coming, so he will not afterwards upon every displeasure cast them out. His *gifts and callings are without repentance*.

2. That the father will, without fail, bring all those to him in due time that were given him. In the *federal transactions* between the Father and the Son, relating to *man's redemption*, as the Son undertook for the justification, sanctification, and salvation of all that should come to him; let me have them put into my hands, and then leave the management of them to me; so the Father, the fountain and original of being, life and grace, undertook to put into his hand all that were given him; and bring them to him.

Now, 1. He here assures us that this shall be done, ver. 37. *All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me*. Christ had complained, ver. 30. of those, who thought they had *seen* him, yet would not *believe* on him; and then he adds this, (1.) For their conviction and awakening, plainly intimating, that their not coming to him and believing on him, if they persisted in it, would be a certain sign that they did not belong to the election of grace; for how can we think that God gave us to Christ, if we give ourselves to the world and the flesh? 2 Pet. i. 10. (2.) For his own comfort and encouragement: *though I have not gathered, yet shall I be glorious*. The election has obtained, and shall, though multitudes be blinded, Rom. xi. 7. Though he lose many of his creatures, yet none of his charge; *All that the Father gives to him shall come to him notwithstanding*. Here we have,

1. The election described; *All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me*. The persons of the elect, and all that belongs to them; all their services, all their interests; as all that he hath is *their's*, so all that they have is *his*, and he speaks of them as *his* all: They were given him in full recompense of his undertaking. Not only all persons, but all things are gathered together in Christ, Eph. i. 10. and reconciled, Col. i. 20. The giving of the chosen remnant to Christ is spoken of, ver. 39. as a thing done. *He hath given them*; here it is spoken of as a thing in the doing, *he giveth them*; because when the first begotten was brought into the world, it should seem there was a renewal of the grant; see Heb. x. 5, &c. God was now about to give him the heathen for his inheritance, Psalm ii. 8. to put him in possession of the desolate heritages, Isa. xlix. 8. to divide him a portion with the great, Isa. liii. 12. And though the Jews, who saw him, believed not on him, yet these (saith he) shall come to me; the other sheep which are not of this fold shall be brought, John x. 15. See Acts xiii. 45, 48.

2. The effect of it secured; *they shall come to me*. This is not in the nature of a promise, but a prediction, that as many as were in the counsel of God ordained to life, shall be brought to life by being brought to Christ. They are scattered, are mingled among the nations, yet none of them shall be forgotten, not a grain of God's corn shall be lost, as is promised, Amos ix. 9. They are by nature alienated from Christ, and averse to him, and yet they shall come. As God's omniscience is engaged for the finding of them all out, so is his omnipotence for the bringing of them all in. Not they shall be *driven* to me, but they shall come freely, shall be made *willing*.

2. He here acquaints us how it shall be done. How shall those who are given to Christ be brought to him? Two things are to be done in order to it.

1. Their understandings shall be enlightened; that is promised, ver. 45, 46. It is written in the prophets who spake of these things before, *And they shall be all taught of God*; this we find, Isa. liv. 13, and Jer. xxxi. 34. *They shall all know me*. Note, In order to our believing on Jesus Christ, it is necessary that we be *taught of God*; that is, (1.) That there be a divine revelation made to us, discovering to us both what we are to believe concerning Christ, and why we are to believe it. There are some things which even nature teacheth, but to bring us to Christ there is need of a higher light. (2.) That there be a *divine work wrought in us*, enabling us to understand and receive these revealed truths, and the evidence of them. God, in giving us reason, teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth; but in giving us faith, he teacheth us more than the natural man: Thus all the church's children, all that are genuine, are *taught of God*; he hath undertaken their education.

It follows then by way of inference from this, that *every man that has heard and learned of the Father, comes to Christ*, ver. 45. (1.) It is here implied, that none will come to Christ but those that have *heard, and learned of the Father*: We shall never be brought to Christ but under a divine conduct; except God by his grace enlighten our minds, inform our judgments, and rectify our mistakes; and not only tell us that we may hear, but teach us that we may learn the truth as it is in Jesus, we shall never be brought to believe in Christ. (2.) That this divine teaching doth so necessarily produce the faith of God's elect, that we may conclude that those who do not come to Christ, have never heard, or learned of the Father, for if they had, doubtless they would have come to Christ. In vain do men pretend to be taught of God, if they believe not in Christ, for he teacheth no other lesson, Gal. i. 8, 9. See how God deals with men as reasonable creatures, draws them with the cords of a man, opens the understanding first, and then by that in a regular way, influenceth the inferior faculties; thus he comes in by the door, but Satan as a robber climbs up another way.

But lest any should dream of a visible appearance of God the Father to the children of men, to teach them these things, and entertain any gross conceptions about hearing and learning of the Father, he adds, ver. 46. *Not that any man hath seen the Father*, it is implied, nor can see him with bodily eyes, or may expect to learn of him as Moses did, to whom he spake face to face; but God, in enlightening men's eyes and teaching them, works in a spiritual way. The Father of spirits hath access to, and influence upon men's spirits undiscerned. Those that have not seen his face, have felt his power. And yet there is one intimately acquainted with the Father, he *which is of God*, i. e. Christ himself, he hath *seen the Father*, John i. 18. Note, 1. Jesus Christ is of God in a peculiar manner, God of God, light of light; not only sent of God, but begotten of God before all worlds. 2. It is the prerogative of Christ to have *seen the Father*, perfectly to know him and his counsels. 3. Even that illumination which is preparative to faith, is conveyed to us through Christ. Those that learn of the Father, so far as they cannot see him themselves, must learn of Christ, who alone hath seen him. As all divine discoveries are made through Christ, so through him all divine powers are exerted.

2. Their wills shall be bowed. If the soul of man had now its original rectitude, there needed no more to influence the will, but the illumination of the understanding; but in the depraved soul of fallen man, there is a rebellion of the will against the right dictates of the understanding; a carnal mind, which is *enmity* itself to the divine light and law: it is therefore requisite that there be a work of grace wrought upon the will, which is here called *drawing*, ver. 44. *No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me, draw him*. The Jews murmured at the doctrine of Christ, not only would not receive it themselves, but were angry that others did; Christ overheard their secret whisperings, and said, ver. 43. *Murmur not among*

among yourselves, lay not the fault of your dislike of my doctrine one upon another, as if it is because you find it generally distasteful; no; it is long of yourselves, and your own corrupt dispositions, which are such as amount to a moral impotency; your antipathies to the truths of God and prejudices against them are so strong, that nothing less than a divine power can conquer them. And this is the case of all mankind; no man can come to me, can persuade himself to come up to the terms of the gospel, except the Father which hath sent me draw him, ver. 44.

Observe, 1. The nature of the work, it is *drawing*; which speaks not a force put upon the will, but a change wrought in the will, whereby of unwilling we are made willing, and a new bias given to the soul by which it inclines to God. This seems to be more than a moral suasion, for by that it is in the power of man to draw; yet it is not to be called a physical impulse, for it lies out of the road of nature; but he that formed the spirit of man within him by his creating power, and fashioneth the hearts of men by his providential influence, knows how to new mould the soul, and to alter its bent and temper, and make it comfortable to himself and his own will, without doing any wrong to its natural liberty. It is such a drawing as works not only a compliance, but a cheerful compliance, a complacency; draw us, and we will run after thee.

2. The necessity of it; no man in this weak and helpless state can come to Christ without it. As we cannot do any natural action without the concurrence of common providence, so we cannot do any action morally good, without the influence of special grace, in which the new man lives, and moves, and has his being, as much as the mere man has in the divine providence.

3. The author of it; the Father which hath sent me. The Father having sent Christ will succeed him, for he would not send him on a fruitless errand. Christ having undertaken to bring souls to glory, God promised him in order thereunto to bring them to him, and so to give him possession of those whom he had given him a right to. God having by promise given the kingdom of Israel to David, did at length draw the hearts of the people to him; so having sent Christ to save souls, he sends souls to him to be saved by him.

4. The crown and perfection of this work; and I will raise him up at the last day. This is four times mentioned in this discourse, and doubtless it includes all the intermediate and preparatory workings of divine grace. When he raises them up at the last day, he will put the left hand to his undertaking, will bring forth the topstone. If he undertake this, sure he can do any thing, and will do every thing that is necessary in order to it. Let our expectations be carried out towards a happiness reserved for the last day, when all the years of time shall be fully complete and ended.

Thirdly, Christ having thus spoken of himself as the bread of life, and of faith as the work of God, comes more particularly to shew, what of himself is this bread, namely, his flesh, and that to believe, is to eat of that, ver. 51—58. where he still prosecutes the metaphor of food. Observe,

1. The preparation of this food; The bread that I will give is my flesh, ver. 51. The flesh of the Son of man, and his blood, ver. 53. His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed, ver. 55.

2. The participation of this food; we must eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ver. 53. and again, ver. 51. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood; and the same words, ver. 55, 57. he that eateth me. This is certainly a parable or figurative discourse, wherein the actions of the soul, upon things spiritual and divine, are represented by bodily actions about things sensible; which made the truths of Christ more intelligible to some, and less so to others, Mark iv. 14. Now let us see,

1. How this discourse of Christ was liable to mistake and misconstruction, that men might see and not perceive.

(1.) It was misinterpreted by the carnal Jews, to whom it was first delivered, ver. 52. They strove among themselves; they whispered to each others ears their dissatisfaction, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Christ spoke, ver. 51. of giving his flesh for us to suffer and die, but they without due consideration understood it of his giving it to us to be eaten; which gave occasion to Christ to tell them, that however what he said was otherwise intended, yet even that also of eating his flesh was no such absurd thing, if rightly understood, as *prima facie* they took it to be.

(2.) It has been wretchedly misconstrued by the church of Rome for the support of their monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation, which gives the lie to our senses, contradicts the nature of a sacrament, and overthrows all convincing evidence. They, like these Jews here, understand it of a corporal and carnal eating of Christ's body, like Nicodemus, John iii. 4. The Lord's supper was not yet instituted, and therefore it could have no reference to that; it is a spiritual eating and drinking that is here spoken of, not a sacramental.

(3.) It is misunderstood by many ignorant carnal people, who from hence infer, that if they take the sacrament when they die they shall certainly go to heaven; which as it makes many that are weak, causelessly uneasy if they want it, so it makes many that are wicked, causelessly easy if they have it. Let us see therefore,

2. How this discourse of Christ's is to be understood.

1. What is meant by the flesh and blood of Christ. It is called, ver. 53. The flesh of the Son of man, and his blood, his as Messiah and Mediator: the flesh and blood which he assumed in his incarnation. Heb. ii. 14. and which he gave up in his death and sufferings; my flesh which I will give to be crucified and slain. It is said to be given for the life of the world, i. e. 1. Instead of the life of the world, which was forfeited by sin, Christ gives his own flesh as a ransom or counter-price. Christ was our bail, bound body for body, (as we say) and therefore his life must go for ours, that ours may be spared: Here am I, let these go their way. 2. In order to the life of the world, to purchase a general offer of eternal life to all the world, and the special assurances of it to all believers. So that the flesh and blood of the Son of man is the Redeemer incarnate and dying: it is Christ and him crucified; and the redemption wrought out by him, with all the precious benefits of redemption; pardon of sin, acceptance with God, the adoption of sons, access to the throne of grace, the promises of the covenant, and eternal life; these are called the flesh and blood of Christ. (1.) Because they are purchased by his flesh and blood, by the breaking of his body, and the shedding of his blood. Well may the purchased privileges be denominated from the price that was paid for them, for it puts a value upon them; write upon them *pretium sanguinis*. (2.) Because they are meat and drink to our souls. Flesh with the blood was prohibited, Gen. ix. 4. but the privileges of the gospel are as flesh and blood to us, prepared for the nourishment of souls. He had before compared himself to bread, which is necessary food; here to flesh, which is delicious. It is a feast of fat things, Isa. xxv. 6. The soul is satisfied with Christ as with marrow and fatness, Psal. lxxiii. 5. It is meat indeed, and drink indeed, truly so, i. e. spiritually, so Dr. Whitby; as Christ is called the true vine, or truly meat, in opposition to the shews and shadows with which the world shams off those that feed upon it. In Christ and his gospel there is real supply and solid satisfaction; that is meat indeed, and drink indeed, which satiates and replenisheth, Jer. xxxi. 25, 26.

2. What is meant by eating this flesh, and drinking this blood, which is so necessary and beneficial; it is certain it means neither more nor less than believing in Christ. As we partake of meat and drink by eating and drinking, so we partake of Christ and his benefits by faith: And believing in Christ, includes these four things which eating and drinking doth. (1.) It implies an appetite to Christ. This spiritual eating and drinking begins with hungering and thirsting, Matt. v. 6. earnest and importunate desires after Christ, not willing to take up with any thing short of an interest in him: give me Christ or else I die. (2.) An application of Christ to ourselves. Meat looked upon will not nourish us, but meat fed upon, and so made our own, and as it were one with us. We must so accept of Christ as to appropriate him to ourselves; my Lord and my God, John xx. 28. (3.) A delight in Christ and his salvation. The doctrine of Christ crucified must be meat and drink to us, most pleasant and delightful. We must feast upon the dainties of the New Testament in the blood of Christ, taking as great complacency in the methods which infinite wisdom has taken to redeem and save us, as ever we did in the most needful supplies or grateful delights of nature. (4.) A derivation of nourishment from him, and a dependence upon him for the support and comfort of our spiritual life, and the strength, growth, and vigour of the new man. To feed upon Christ is to do all in his name, in union with him, and by virtue drawn from him; it is to live upon him as we do upon our meat. How our bodies are nourished by our food we cannot describe, but that they are so, we know and find, so it is with this spiritual nourishment. Our Saviour was so well pleased with this metaphor, as very significant and expressive, that when afterwards he would institute some outward sensible signs, by which to represent our communicating of the benefits of his death, he chose those of eating and drinking, and made them sacramental actions.

Having thus explained the general meaning of this part of Christ's discourse, the particulars are reducible to two heads.

1. The necessity of our feeding upon Christ, ver. 53. Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. That is, 1. It is a certain sign you have no spiritual life in you, if you have no desire towards Christ, nor delight in him. If the soul doth not hunger and thirst, certainly it doth not live: It is a sign we are dead indeed, if we are dead to such meat and drink as this. When artificial bees, that by curious springs were made to move to and fro, were to be distinguished from natural ones, (they say) it was done by putting honey among them, which the natural bees only flocked to, but the artificial ones minded it not, for they had no life in them. 2. It is certain you can have no spiritual life, unless you derive it from Christ by faith; separated from him you can do nothing. Faith in Christ is the *primum vivens*, the first living principle of grace; without it we have not the truth of spiritual life, nor any title to eternal life: our bodies may as well live without meat, as our souls without Christ.

2. The benefit and advantages of it, in two things.

1. We shall be one with Christ, as our bodies are with our food when it is digested; ver. 56. He that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, that lives by faith in Christ crucified, (it is spoken of as a continued act) he dwelleth in me, and I in him. By faith we have a close and intimate union with Christ; he is in us, and we in him, John xvii. 21, 22, 23. 1 John iii. 24. Believers dwell in Christ as their strong hold or city of refuge; Christ dwells in them as the master of the house, to rule it and provide for it. Such is the union between Christ and believers, that he shares in their griefs, and they share in his graces and joys; he sops with them upon their bitter herbs, and they with him upon his rich dainties. It is an inseparable union, like that between the body and the digested food, Rom. viii. 35. 1 John iv. 13.

2. We shall live eternally by him, as our bodies live by our food. (1.) We shall live by him; ver. 57. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. We have here the series and order of the divine life. (1.) God is the living Father, hath life in and of himself: I am that I am is his name for ever. (2.) Jesus Christ as mediator lives by the Father; he has life in himself, John v. 26. but he has it of the Father; he that sent him not only qualified him with that life which was necessary for so great an undertaking, but constituted him the treasury of divine life to us; breathed into the second Adam the breath of spiritual life, as into the first Adam the breath of natural life. (3.) True believers receive this divine life by virtue of their union with Christ, which is inferred from the union between the Father and the Son, as it is compared to it, John xvii. 21. for therefore he that eateth me, or feeds on me, even he shall live by me: Those that live upon Christ shall live by him. The life of believers is had from Christ, John i. 16. it is hid with Christ, Col. iii. 4. we live by him as the members by the head, the branches by the root; because he lives, we shall live also. (2.) We shall live eternally by him. Ver. 54. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, as it is prepared in the gospel to be the food of souls, he hath eternal life, he hath it now, as ver. 40. he hath that in him which is eternal life begun; he has the earnest and foretaste of it, and the hope of it; he shall live for ever, ver. 54. His happiness shall run parallel with the longest line of eternity itself.

The historian concludes with an account where Christ had this discourse with the Jews, ver. 59. In the synagogue, as he taught: implying, that he taught them many other things besides these, but this was that in his discourse which was new. He adds this, that he said these things in the synagogue, to shew, (1.) The credit of Christ's doctrine. His truths taught no corners, but were publicly preached in mixed assemblies, as able to abide the most severe and impartial test. Christ pleaded this upon his trial, John xviii. 23. I ever taught in the synagogue. (2.) The credibility of his narrative of it. To assure you that the discourse was fairly represented, he appeals to the synagogue at Capernaum, where it might be examined.

60. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? 61. When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? 62. What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? 63. It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. 64. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. 65. And he said, therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. 66. ¶ From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. 67. Then said Jesus unto the twelve,

twelve, Will ye also go away? 68. Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. 69. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. 70. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? 71. He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

We have here an account of the effect of Christ's discourse, some were offended, and others edified by it; some driven from him, and others brought nearer to him.

First, To some it was a *saucour of death unto death*, not only to the Jews, who were professed enemies to him and his doctrine, but even to many of his disciples; such as were disciples at large, that were his frequent hearers, and followed him in public; a mixed multitude, like those among Israel, that began all the discontents. Now here we have,

1. Their murmurings at the doctrine they heard, *ver.* 60. not a few but many of them were offended at it. Of the several sorts of ground that received the seed, only one in four brought forth fruit. See what they say to it, *ver.* 60. *This is a hard saying, who can hear it?* 1. They do not like it themselves, what stuff is this? *Eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of man?* If it be understood figuratively, it is not intelligible; if literally, not practicable. What! must they turn cannibals? Can they not be religious but they must be barbarous? *Si Christiani adorant quod comedunt* (said Averroes) *sit anima mea cum philosophis*. Now when they found it a hard saying, if they had humbly begged of Christ to have declared unto them this parable, he would have opened it, and their understandings too, for the meek will he teach his way; but they were not willing to have Christ's sayings explained to them, because they would not lose this pretence for rejecting them, that they were hard sayings. 2. They think it impossible any one else should like it, *Who can hear it?* Surely none can. Thus the scoffers at religion are ready to undertake, that all the intelligent parts of mankind concur with them; they conclude with great assurance that no man of sense will admit the doctrine of Christ, nor any man of spirit submit to his laws; because they cannot bear to be so tutored, so tied up themselves, they think none else can; *who can hear it?* Thanks be to God, thousands have heard these sayings of Christ, and have found them not only easy but pleasant, as their necessary food.

2. Christ's animadversions upon their murmurings.

1. He well enough knew their murmurings, *ver.* 61. Their cavils were secret in their own breasts, or whispered among themselves in a corner. But 1. Christ knew them, he saw them, he heard them. Note, Christ takes notice not only of the bold and open *defiances* that are done to his name and glory by daring sinners, but of the secret slights that are put upon his doctrine by carnal professors; he knows that which the *fool faith in his heart*, and cannot for shame speak out; he observes how his doctrine is *resented* by those to whom it is preached; who rejoice in it, and who murmur at it; who are reconciled to it, and how before it; and who quarrel with it, and rebel against it, though never so secretly. 2. He knew it in himself; not by any information given him, or any external indication of the thing, but by his own divine omniscience. He knew it, not as the prophets, by a *divine revelation* made to him. That which the prophets desired to know was sometimes hid from them, as 2 Kings iv. 7. but by a *divine knowledge* in him. He is that essential word that *discerns the thoughts of the heart*. Heb. iv. 12, 13. Thoughts are words to Christ, we should therefore take heed not what we say and do, but what we think.

2. He well enough knew how to answer them. *Doth this offend you?* Is this a stumbling-block to you? See how people by their own wilful mistakes create offences to themselves: They take offence where there is none given, and make it even there where there is nothing to make it of. Note, We may justly wonder that so much offence should be taken at the doctrine of Christ for so little cause. Christ speaks of it here with wonder, *Doth this offend you?* How unreasonable are your quarrels?

Now in answer to those who condemned his doctrine as intricate and obscure (*Si non vis intelligi, debes negligi.*)

1. He gives them a hint of his ascension into heaven, as that which would give an irresistible evidence of the truth of his doctrine, *ver.* 62. *What, and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?* And what then? 1. If I should tell you of that, surely it would much more offend you, and you would think my pretensions too high indeed. If this be so hard a saying that you cannot hear it, how will you digest it when I tell you of my returning to heaven, from whence I came down? See John iii. 13. Those who stumble at smaller difficulties, should consider how they will get over greater. 2. When you see the son of man ascend, this will much more offend you, for then my body will be less capable of being eaten by you in that gross sense wherein you now understand it: so Dr. Whitby. Or, 3. When you see that, or hear it from those that shall see it, surely then you will be satisfied. You think I take too much upon me, when I say, *I came down from heaven*, for that was it you quarrelled with, *ver.* 42. but will you think so when you see me return to heaven. If he ascended, certainly he descended, Eph. iv. 9, 10. Christ did often refer himself thus to subsequent proofs, as John i. 50, 51.—ii. 14. Matt. xii. 40.—xxvi. 64. Let us wait a while till the mystery of God shall be finished, and then we shall see there was no reason to be offended at any of Christ's sayings.

2. He gives them a general key to this, and all such parabolical discourses, teaching them that they are to be understood spiritually, and not after a corporal and carnal manner: *ver.* 63. *It is the spirit that quickens, the flesh profiteth nothing.* As it is in the natural body, the animal spirits quicken and enliven it, and without these the most nourishing food would profit nothing; what would the body be the better for bread, if it were not quickened and animated by the spirit, so it is with the soul. 1. The bare participation of ordinances, unless the Spirit of God work with them, and quicken the soul by them, *profiteth nothing*; the word and ordinances, if the Spirit work with them, are as food to a living man, if not they are as food to a dead man. Even the flesh of Christ, the sacrifice for sin, will avail us nothing unless the blessed Spirit quicken our souls thereby, and enforce the powerful influences of his death upon us, till we by his grace are planted together in the likeness of it. 2. The doctrine of eating Christ's flesh, and drinking his blood, if it be understood literally, *profits nothing*, but rather leads us into mistakes and prejudices; but the spiritual sense and meaning of it quickens the soul, makes it *alive and lively*; for so it follows, *the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.* To eat the flesh of Christ, is a hard saying, but to believe that Christ died for me, and to derive from that doctrine strength and comfort in my approaches to God, my oppositions of sin, and preparations for a future state; this is the *spirit and life* of that saying, and construing it thus it is an excellent saying. The reason why men *mistake* Christ's sayings, is because they *mistake* them. The literal sense

of a parable doth us no good, we are never the wiser for it, but the spiritual meaning is instructive. 3. *The flesh*, i. e. those that are in the flesh, (so some understand it) that are under the power of a carnal mind, they profit nothing by Christ's discourses; but *the Spirit*, i. e. those that have the Spirit, that are spiritual, they are quickened and enlivened by them, for they are received *ad modum recipientis*. They found fault with Christ's sayings, whereas the fault was in themselves; it is only to *sensual* minds that spiritual things are *senseless* and *useless*, spiritual minds *relish* them, see 1 Cor. ii. 11, 15.

5. He gives them an intimation of his knowledge of them, and that he had expected no better from them, though they called themselves his disciples, *ver.* 64, 65. Now was fulfilled that of the prophet, speaking of Christ and his doctrine, Isa. liii. 1. *Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* Both these Christ here takes notice of.

(1.) They did not believe his report. There are *some of you* who said you would leave all to follow me, who yet believe not; and this was the reason why the word preached did not profit them, because it was not mixed with faith, Heb. iv. 2. They did not believe him to be the Messiah, else they would have acquiesced in the doctrine they preached, and not have quarrelled with it, though there were some things in it dark and hard to be understood. *Oportet discentem credere*. Young beginners in learning must take things upon their teachers word. Note, 1. Among those who are nominal Christians, there are many that are real infidels. 2. The unbelief of hypocrites, before it discovers itself to the world, is naked and open before the eyes of Christ. He knew from the beginning who they were of the multitudes that followed him, that believed, and who of the twelve should betray him; he knew, from the beginning of their acquaintance with him, and attendance on him, when they were in the hottest pang of their zeal, who were sincere, as Nathanael, John i. 47. and who were not. Before they distinguished themselves by an overt-act, he could infallibly distinguish *who believed*, and who did not; whose love was counterfeit, and whose cordial. We may gather hence, 1. That the apostasy of those who have long made a plausible profession of religion, is a certain proof of their constant hypocrisy; and that from the beginning they believed not; but it is not a proof of the possibility of the total and final apostasy of any true believers; such revolts are not to be called the fall of real saints, but the discovery of pretended ones: see 1 John ii. 19. *Stella cadens non jiella fuit*. 2. That it is Christ's prerogative to know the heart; he knows who they are that believe not, but dissimble in their profession, and yet continues them room in his church, the use of his ordinances, and the credit of his name; and doth not discover them in this world, unless they by their own wickedness discover themselves; because such is the constitution of his visible church, and the discovering day is yet to come; but if we pretend to judge men's hearts, we step into Christ's throne, and anticipate his judgment. We are often deceived in men, and see cause to change our sentiments of them; but this we are sure of, that Christ knows all men, and his judgment is according to truth.

(2.) The reason why they did not believe his report, was because the arm of the Lord was not revealed unto them; for, *ver.* 65. *Thy desire said I unto you, that no man can come to me, except it were given unto him of my Father*, referring to *ver.* 44. Christ therefore could not but know who believed, and who did not, because faith is the gift and work of God, and all his Father's gifts and works could not but be known to him, for they all passed through his hands. There he had said, none could come to him, except the Father draw him; here he saith, except it were given him of my Father; which shews that God draws souls by giving them grace and strength, and a heart to come; without which, such is the moral impotency of man in his fallen state, that he cannot come.

3. We have here their final apostasy from Christ hereupon, *ver.* 66. *From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.* When we admit into our minds hard thoughts of the word and works of Christ, and conceive a secret dislike, and are willing to hear insinuations tending to their reproach, we are then entering into temptation; it is as the letting forth of water, it is looking back, which, if infinite mercy prevent not, will end in drawing back; therefore *obsta principis*, take heed of the beginnings of apostasy.

1. See here the backsliding of these disciples. Many of them went back to their houses, and families, and callings, which they had left for a time to follow him; went back, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise; went back, as Orpah did, to their people, and to their gods, Ruth i. 17. They had entered themselves in Christ's school, but they went back, did not only play truant for once, but took leave of him and his doctrine for ever. Note, The apostasy of Christ's disciples from him, though really a strange thing, yet has been such a common thing that we need not think strange at it. Here were many that went back; it is often so, when some backslide, many backslide with them; the disease is infectious.

2. The occasion of this backsliding. From that time, from the time that Christ preached this comfortable doctrine, that he is the bread of life, and those who by faith feed upon him shall live by him, which, one would think, should have engaged them to cleave the more closely to him, from that time they withdrew. Note, The corrupt and wicked heart of man often makes that an occasion of offence, which is indeed matter of the greatest comfort. Christ fore-saw that they would thus take offence at what he said, and yet he said it. That which is the undoubted word and truth of Christ, must be faithfully delivered, whoever are offended at it. Men's humours must be captivated to God's word, and not that accommodated to men's humours.

3. The degree of their apostasy; they walked no more with him, returned no more to him, and attended no more upon his ministry. It is hard for those who have been once enlightened, and have tasted the good word of God, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6.

Secondly, This discourse was to others a *saucour of life unto life*. Many went back, but thanks be to God all did not; even then the twelve stuck to him. Though the faith of some be overthrown, yet the foundation of God stands sure. Observe here,

1. The affectionate question which Christ put to the twelve, *ver.* 67. *Will ye also go away?* He saith nothing to them which went back; *If the unbelieving depart, let them depart*; it was no great loss of those whom he never had; light come, light go; but he takes this occasion to speak to the twelve, to confirm them, and by trying their steadfastness the more to fix them. *Will ye also go away?* 1. It is at your choice whether ye will or no; if ye will forsake me, now is the time when so many do: It is an hour of temptation, if you will go back, go now. Note, Christ will detain none with him against their wills; his soldiers are volunteers, not pressed men. The twelve had now had time enough to try how they liked Christ and his doctrine, and that none of them might afterwards say they were trepanned into discipleship, and if it were to do again they would not do it; he here allows them a power of revocation, and leaves them at their liberty, as Joshua xxiv. 15. Ruth i. 15. 2. It is at your peril, if you do go away. If there were any secret inclination in the heart of any of them to depart from him now, he stops it with this awakening question, *will you also go away?* Think not that you hang at as loose an end as they did, and may go away as easily as they can. They have not been so intimate with me as you have

been, nor received so many favours from me; they are gone, but will you go? Remember your character, and say, whatever others do we will never go away: *Should such a man as I flee?* Neh. vi. 11. Note, The nearer we have been to Christ, and the longer we have been with him, the more mercies we have received from him, and the more engagements we have laid ourselves under to him, the greater will be our sin if we desert him. 3. I have reason to think you will not. Will you go away? No, I have faster hold of you than so; *I hope better things of you*, Heb. vi. 9. *for you are they that have continued with me*, Luke xxii. 28. When the apostasy of some is a grief to the Lord Jesus, the constancy of others is so much the more his honour, and he is pleased with it accordingly. Christ and believers know one another too well to part upon every displeasure.

2. The believing reply which Peter, in the name of the rest, made to this question, ver. 68, 69. Christ put the question to them, as Joshua put Israel to their choice whom they would serve, with design to draw out from them a promise to adhere to him, and it had the like effect. *Nay, but we will serve the Lord*. Peter was upon all occasions the mouth of the rest, not so much because he had more of his Master's ear than they, but because he had more tongue of his own; and what he said was sometimes approved, and sometimes reprimanded, *Matt. xvi. 17—23*. the common lot of those who are swift to speak. This here was well said, admirably well; and probably he said it by the direction and with the express assent of his fellow-disciples; at least he knew their mind, and spoke the sense of them all, and did not except Judas, for we must hope the best.

1. Here is a good resolution to adhere to Christ, and so expressed, as to intimate that they would not entertain the least thought of leaving him. *Lord, to whom shall we go?* It were folly to go from thee, unless we knew where to mend ourselves; no, Lord, we like our choice too well to change. Note, Those who leave Christ, would do well to consider whom they will go to, and whether they can expect to find rest and peace any where but in him. See *Psal. lxxiii. 27, 28. Hos. ii. 9. Whither shall we go?* Shall we make our court to the world? It will certainly deceive us; shall we return to sin? It will certainly destroy us; shall we leave the fountain of living waters for broken cisterns? The disciples resolve to continue their pursuit of life and happiness, and will have a guide to it, and will adhere to Christ as their guide, for they can never have a better. Shall we go to the heathen philosophers, and become their disciples? They are become vain in their imaginations, and professing themselves to be wise in other things, are become fools in religion? Shall we go to the Scribes and Pharisees, and sit at their feet? What good can they do us, who have made void the commandments of God by their traditions? Shall we go to Moses? he will send us back again to thee. Therefore, if ever we find the way to happiness, it must be in following thee. Note, Christ's holy religion appears to great advantage, when it is compared with other institutions, for then it will be seen how far it excels them all. Let them who find fault with this religion, before they quit it, find a better. A divine teacher we must have, can we find a better than Christ; a divine revelation we cannot be without, if the scripture be not such a one, where else may we look for it?

2. Here is a good reason for this resolution. It was not the inconsiderate resolve of a blind affection, but the result of mature deliberation. The disciples were resolved never to go away from Christ.

(1.) Because of the advantage they promised themselves by him, *Thou hast the words of eternal life*. They themselves did not fully understand Christ's discourse, for as yet the doctrine of the cross was a riddle to them; but in the general they were satisfied that he had the words of eternal life, i. e. (1.) That the word of his doctrine shewed the way to eternal life, let it before us, and directed us what to do, that we might inherit it. (2.) That the word of his doom and determination must confer eternal life. His having the words of eternal life, is the same with his having power to give eternal life to as many as were given him, John xvii. 2. He had in the foregoing discourse assured eternal life to his followers, these disciples fasten upon that plain saying, and therefore resolved to stick to him, when the others overlooked that, and fastened upon the hard sayings, and therefore forsook him. Though we cannot account for every mystery, every obscurity in Christ's doctrine, yet we know in the general it is the word of eternal life, and therefore must live and die by it; for if we forsake Christ, we forsake our own mercies.

(2.) Because of the assurance they had concerning him, ver. 69. *We know and are sure, that thou art that Christ*. If he be the promised Messiah, he must bring in an everlasting righteousness, Dan. ix. 24. and therefore has the words of eternal life, for righteousness reigns to eternal life, Rom. v. 21. Observe, 1. The doctrine they believed; that this Jesus was the Messiah promised to the fathers, and expected by them, and that he was not a mere man, but the Son of the living God, the same to whom God had said, *Thou art my Son*, Psalm ii. 7. In times of temptation to apostasy, it is good to have recourse to our first principles, and stick to them; and if we faithfully abide by that which is *past dispute*, we shall be the better able both to find and to keep the truth in matters of doubtful disputation. 2. The degree of their faith; it rose up to a full assurance, *we are sure*. We have known it by experience, that is the best knowledge. We should take occasion from others wavering to be so much the more established, especially in that which is the present truth. When we have so strong a faith in the gospel of Christ, as boldly to venture our souls upon it, knowing whom we have believed, then, and not till then, we shall be willing to venture every thing else for it.

3. The melancholy remark which our Lord Jesus made upon this reply of Peter's, ver. 70, 71. *Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?* And the evangelist tells us who he meant, *he spake of Judas Iscariot*. Peter had undertaken for them all, that they would be tight to their Master. Now Christ doth not condemn his charity, it is always good to hope the best, but he tacitly corrects his confidence. We must not be too sure concerning any. God knows them that are his, we do not. Observe here,

1. Hypocrites are betrayers of Christ, are no better than devils. Judas not only had a devil, but he was a devil. One of you is a false accuser, so *διαβολος* sometimes signifies, 1 Tim. iii. 11. and it is probable that Judas, when he sold his Master to the chief priests, represented him to them as an ill man, to justify himself in what he did. But I rather take it as we read it, *He is a devil*; a devil incarnate; a false apostle, as the devil a fallen angel. He is Satan, an adversary, an enemy to Christ. He is Abaddon, and Apollyon, a son of perdition. He was of his father the devil, did his lusts, was in his interests, as Cain, 1 John iii. 12. Those whose bodies were possessed by the devil, are never called devils, (demoniacs, but not devils) but Judas, into whose heart Satan had entered and filled it, is called a devil.

2. Many that are seeming saints are real devils. Judas had as fair an outside as many of the apostles, his venom was, like that of the serpent, covered with a fine skin. He cast out devils, and appeared an enemy to the devil's kingdom, and yet himself a devil all the while. Not only he will be one shortly, but he is one now. It is strange, and to be admired; Christ speaks of it with wonder, *Have not I?* It is sad, and to be lamented, that ever Christianity should be made a cloak to diabolism.

3. The disguises of hypocrites, however they may deceive men, and put a cheat upon them, cannot deceive Christ, for his piercing eyes see through them. He can call those devils that call themselves Christians, like the prophet's greeting to Jeroboam's wife, when she came to him in masquerade, 1 Kings xiv. 6. *Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam*. Christ's divine sight, far better than any double sight, can see spirits.

4. There are those who are chosen by Christ to special services, that yet prove false to him. *I have chosen you to the apostleship*, for it is expressly said, Judas was not chosen to eternal life, John xiii. 18. and yet one of you is a devil. Note, Advancement to places of honour and trust in the church, is no certain evidence of saving grace. *We have prophesied in thy name*.

5. In the most select societies on this side heaven, it is no new thing to meet with those that are corrupt. Of the twelve that were chosen to an intimate conversation with an incarnate deity, as great an honour and privilege as ever men were chosen to, one was an incarnate devil. The historian lays an emphasis upon this, that Judas was one of the twelve, that were so dignified and distinguished. Let us not therefore reject and unchurch the twelve, because one of them is a devil, nor say they are all cheats and hypocrites, because one of them was so; let those that are so bear the blame, and not those who, while they are undiscovered, incorporate with them. There is a society within the veil, into which no unclean thing shall enter; a church of first-born, in which are no false brethren.

C H A P. VII.

In this chapter we have, (1.) Christ's declining for some time to appear publicly in Judea, ver. 1. (2.) His design to go up to Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles, and his discourse with his kindred in Galilee, concerning his going up to this feast, ver. 3—13. (3.) His preaching publicly in the temple at that feast. 1. In the midst of the feast, ver. 14, 15. we have his discourse with the Jews, (1.) Concerning his doctrine, ver. 16—18. (2.) Concerning the crime of sabbath-breaking laid to his charge, ver. 19—24. (3.) Concerning himself, both whence he came, and whither he was going, ver. 25—36. 2. On the last day of the feast, (1.) His gracious invitation to poor souls to come to him, ver. 37—39. (2.) The reception that it met with. 1. Many of the people disputed about it, ver. 40—44. 2. The chief priests would have brought him into trouble for it, but were balked by their officers, ver. 45—49. and then silenced by one of their own court, ver. 50—53.

1. AFTER these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. 2. Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. 3. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. 4. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world. 5. For neither did his brethren believe in him. 6. Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready. 7. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. 8. Go ye up unto this feast; I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come. 9. When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee. 10. ¶ But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. 11. Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? 12. And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. 13. Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.

We have here,

1. The reason given why Christ spent more of his time in Galilee than in Judea, ver. 1. *because the Jews*, the people in Judea and Jerusalem sought to kill him, for curing the impotent man on the sabbath-day, John v. 16. They thought to be the death of him, either by a popular tumult, or by a legal prosecution; in consideration of this, he kept at a distance in another part of the country; very much out of the lines of Jerusalem's communication: It is not said, he durst not, but he would not walk in Jewry; it was not through fear and cowardice that he declined it, but in prudence, because his hour was not yet come.

Note, 1. Gospel-light is justly taken away from those that endeavour to extinguish it and blow it out. Christ will withdraw from those that drive him from them, and hide his face from those that spit in it, and justly shut up his bowels from those that spurn at them. 2. In times of imminent peril, it is not only allowable, but advisable to withdraw and abscond for our own safety and preservation, and to choose the service of those places which are least perilous, *Matt. xvi. 23*. Then, and not till then, we are called to expose and lay down our lives, when we cannot save them without sin. 3. If the providence of God casts persons of merit into places of obscurity and little note, it must not be thought strange, it was the lot of our Master himself; he who was fit to have sat in the highest of Moses's seats, willingly walked in Galilee among the ordinary sort of people. Observe, He did not sit still in Galilee, nor bury himself alive there, but walked; he went about doing good. When we cannot do what and where we would, we must do what and where we can.

2. The approach of the feast of tabernacles, ver. 2. one of the three solemnities which called for the personal attendance of all the males at Jerusalem; see the institution of it, *Lev. xxiii. 34, &c.* and the revival of it after a long disuse, *Neh. viii. 14*. It was intended to be both a memorial of the tabernacle state of Israel in the wilderness, and a figure of the tabernacle state of God's spiritual Israel in this world. This feast, which was instituted so many hundred years before, was still religiously observed. Note, Divine institutions are never antiquated, nor go out of date by length of time, nor must wilderness mercies ever be forgotten. But it is called the Jews' feast, because it was now shortly to be abolished, as a mere Jewish thing, and left to them that served the tabernacle.

3. Christ's

3. Christ's discourse with his *brethren*: some of his kindred, whether by his mother or his supposed father, is not certain; but they were such as pretended to have an interest in him, and therefore interposed to advise him in his conduct. And observe;

1. Their ambition and vain-glory, in urging him to make a more public appearance than he did. *Depart hence* (said they) *and go into Judea*, ver. 3. where thou wilt make a better figure than thou canst here. Two reasons they give for this advice.

1. That it would be an encouragement to those in and about Jerusalem, who had a respect for him; for expecting his temporal kingdom, the royal seat of which they concluded must be at Jerusalem, they would have disciples there to be particularly countenanced, and thought the time he spent among his Galilean disciples wasted and thrown away, and his miracles turning to no account unless they at Jerusalem saw them. Or, that *thy disciples*, i. e. all of them in general, who will be gathered at Jerusalem to keep the feast, may see *thy works*, and not as here, a few at one time, and a few at another.

2. That it would be for the advancing of his own name and honour; *There is no man that doth any thing in secret*, if he himself seeks to be known openly. They take it for granted, that Christ sought to make known himself, and therefore thought it absurd for him to conceal his miracles; *If thou do these things*, if thou be so well able to gain the applause of the people, and the approbation of the rulers by thy miracles, venture abroad, and *shew thyself to the world*. Supported with these credentials, thou canst not fail of acceptance, and therefore it is high time to set up for an interest, and think of being great.

Now one would not think there were any harm in this, and yet the evangelist notes it as an evidence of their infidelity, for *neither did his brethren believe in him*, ver. 5. if they had they would not have said this. Observe, (1.) It was an honour to be of the kindred of Christ, but no *saving* honour; they that hear his word and keep it, are the kindred he values. Sure grace runs in no blood in the world, when not in that of Christ's family. (2.) It was a sign Christ did not aim at any secular interest, for then his kindred would have struck in with him, and he would have secured them first. (3.) There were those that were akin to Christ according to the flesh, who did believe in him, three of the twelve were his brethren; and yet others as nearly allied to him as they, did not believe on him. Many that have the same external privileges and advantages, do not make the same use of them.

But what was there amiss in this advice which they gave him? I answer, (1.) It was a piece of presumption for them to prescribe to Christ, and to teach him what measures to take; it was a sign they did not believe him able to guide them, when they did not think him sufficient to guide himself. (2.) They discovered a great carelessness of his safety, when they would have him go to Judea, where they knew the Jews sought to kill him. They that believed in him, and loved him dissuaded him from Judea, *John xi. 8.* (3.) Some think they hoped that if his miracles were wrought at Jerusalem, the Pharisees and rulers would try them and discover some cheat in them, which would justify their unbelief. So Dr. Whitby. (4.) Perhaps they were weary of his company in Galilee, (for are not all *these that speak Galileans*?) and this was in effect, a desire that he would depart out of their coasts. (5.) They carefully insinuate that he neglected his disciples, and denied them such a sight of his works, as was necessary to the support of their faith. (6.) They tacitly reproach him as *mean spirited*, that he durst not enter the lists with the great men, nor trust himself upon the stage of public action, which, if he had any thing of courage and a great soul he would do, and not sneak thus and skulk into a corner; thus Christ's humility, and his humiliation, and the small figure which his religion has usually made in the world, have been often turned to the reproach both of him and it. (7.) They seem to question the truth of the miracles he wrought, in saying, *If thou do these things*; if they will bear the test of a public scrutiny in the courts above, produce them there. (8.) They think Christ altogether such a one as themselves, as subject as they to the politics of the world, and as desirous as they to make a fair show in the flesh; whereas he sought not honour from men. (9.) Self was at the bottom of all; they hoped, if he would make himself as great as he might, they being his kindred should share in his honour, and have respect paid them for his sake. Note, 1. Many carnal people go to public ordinances, to worship at the feast on'y to *shew themselves*, and all their care is to make a good appearance, to present themselves handsomely to the world. 2. Many that seem to seek Christ's honour, do really therein seek their own, and make it serve a turn for themselves.

2. The prudence and humility of our Lord Jesus, which appeared in his answer to the advice his brethren gave him, ver. 6, 7, 8. Though there were so many base insinuations in it, he answered them mildly. Note, Even that which is said without reason, yet should be answered without passion; we should learn of our master to reply with meekness even to that which is most impertinent and imperious; and where it is easy to find much amiss, to seem not to see it, and wink at the affront.

They expected Christ's company with them to the feast, perhaps hoping he would bear their charges. But here,

(1.) He shews the difference between himself and them, in two things.

1. His time was set, so was not theirs. *My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready.* Understand it of the time of his going up to this feast. It was an indifferent thing to them when they went, for they had nothing of moment to do, either where they were to detain them there, or where they were going to hasten them thither; but every minute of Christ's time was precious, and had its own peculiar business allotted to it. He had some work yet to be done in Galilee before he left the country; in the harmony of the gospels betwixt the motion made by his kindred, and his going up to this feast, comes in the story of his sending forth the seventy disciples, *Luke x. 1*, &c. which was an affair of very great consequence; his time is not yet, for that must be done first. Those that live useles lives have their time always ready, they can come and go when they please; but those whose time is filled up with duty, will often find themselves straitened, and they have not yet time for that which others can do at any time. Those that are made the servants of God, as all men are, and that have made themselves the servants of all, as all useful men have, must not expect nor covet to be masters of their own time. The confinement of business is a thousand times better than the liberty of idleness. Or it may be meant of the time of his appearing publicly in Jerusalem; Christ who knows all men, and all things, knew that the best and most proper time for it would be about the middle of the feast. We who are ignorant and short-sighted, are apt to prescribe to him, and to think he should deliver his people, and so shew himself now, just now; the present time is our time, but he is fittest to judge, and it may be his time is not yet come; his people are not yet ready for deliverance, nor his enemies ripe for ruin; let us therefore wait with patience for his time, for all he doth will be most glorious in its season.

2. His life was sought, so was not theirs, ver. 7. They in shewing themselves to the world, did not expose themselves. *The world cannot hate you*, for ye are of the world, its children, its servants, and in with its interests, and no doubt the world will love its own; see *John xv. 19*, *Unholy souls*,

whom the holy God cannot love, the world that lies in wickedness cannot hate; but he in shewing himself to the world, laid himself open to the greatest danger, for *me it hateth*. Christ is not only slighted as inconsiderable in the world, *The world knew him not*, but hated, as if he had been hateful to the world; thus ill was he requited for his love to the world; reigning sin is a rooted antipathy and enmity to Christ.

But why did the world hate Christ, what evil had he done to it? Had he, like Alexander, under colour of conquering it; laid it waste? no, but because (saith he) *I testify of it, that the works of it are evil*. Note, 1. The works of an evil world, are evil works; as the tree is, so are the fruits; it is a dark world, and an apostate world, and its works works of darkness and rebellion. 2. Our Lord Jesus, both by himself and by his ministers, did and will both discover and testify against the evil works of this wicked world. 3. It is a great uneasiness and provocation to the world to be convicted of the evil of its works. It is for the honour of virtue and piety, that those who are impious and vicious, do not care for hearing of it, for their own consciences make them ashamed of the turpitude there is in sin, and afraid of the punishment it follows after sin. 4. Whatever is pretended, the real cause of the world's enmity to the gospel, is the testimony it bears against sin and sinners. Christ witnesses by their doctrine and conversation torment them that dwell on the earth, and therefore are treated so barbarously, *Rev. xi. 10*. But it is better to incur the world's hatred by our testimony against its wickedness, than gain its good-will by going down the stream with it.

(2.) He dismisseth them, with a design to stay behind for some time in Galilee, ver. 8. *Go ye up to this feast, I go not up yet*. 1. He allows their going to the feast, though they were carnal and hypocritical in it. Note, Even those who go not to holy ordinances with great affections and sincere intentions, yet must not be hindered and discouraged from going; who knows but they may be wrought upon there? 2. He denies them his company when they went to the feast, because they were carnal and hypocritical. Those that go to ordinances for ostentation, or to serve some secular purpose, go without Christ and will speed accordingly. How sad is the condition of that man, though he reckon himself akin to Christ, to whom he saith, *Go up to such an ordinance, go pray, go hear the word, go receive the sacrament, but I go not up with thee: Go thou and appear before God, but I will not appear for thee*, as *Exod. xxxiii. 1-3*. But if the presence of Christ go not with us, to what purpose should we go up? *Go ye up, I go not up*. When we are going to, and coming from solemn ordinances, it concerns us to be careful what company we have and choose, and to avoid that which is vain and carnal, lest the coal of good affections be quenched by corrupt communication, *I go not up yet to this feast*; he doth not say, *I will not go up at all*; but not yet. There may be reason for deferring a particular duty, which yet must not be wholly omitted or laid aside, see *Numb. ix. 11*. The reason he gives is, *My time is not yet full come*. Note, Our Lord Jesus is very exact and punctual in knowing and keeping his time, and as it was the time fixed, so it was the best time.

3. Christ's continuance in Galilee, till his full time was come, ver. 9. He saying these things to them (*ταρτα δὲ εἰπὼν*) *abode still in Galilee*; because of this discourse he continued there; for, 1. He would not be influenced by those that advised him to seek honour from men, nor go along with those that put him upon making a figure; he would not seem to countenance the temptation. 2. He would not depart from his own purpose. He had said upon a clear foresight, and mature deliberation, that he would not go up yet to this feast, and therefore he abode still in Galilee. It becomes the followers of Christ thus to be steady, and not to use lightness.

4. His going up to the feast when his time was come. Observe, 1. When he went. *When his brethren were gone up*. He would not go up with them, lest they should have made a noise and disturbance, under pretence of shewing him to the world; whereas it agreed both with the prediction and with his Spirit, not to strive or cry, or let his voice be heard in the streets, *Isa. xlii. 2*. But he went up after them. We may lawfully join in the same religious worship with those, that yet we should decline an intimate acquaintance and converse with; for the blessing of ordinances depends upon the grace of God, and not upon the grace of our fellow-worshippers. His carnal brethren went up first and then he went. Note, In the external performances of religion, it is possible that formal hypocrites may get the start of those that are sincere. Many come first to the temple, that are brought thither by vain glory, and go thence unjustified, as he, *Luke x. 10*. It is not he who comes first that will be the question, but who comes first? If we bring our hearts with us, it is no matter who gets before us.

2. How he went, *as is wont*, as if he were hiding himself. Not openly, but as it were in secret, rather for fear of giving offence, than of receiving injury. He went up to the feast because it was an opportunity of honouring God and doing good; but he went up as it were in secret, because he would not provoke the government. Note, provided the work of God be done effectually, it is best done when it is done with least noise. The kingdom of God needs not come with observation, *Luke xvii. 20*. We may do the work of God privately, and yet not do it deceitfully.

5. The great expectation that there was of him among the Jews at Jerusalem, ver. 11, 12, 13. Having formerly come up to the feasts and signalized himself by the miracles he wrought, he had made himself the subject of much discourse and observation.

1. They could not but think of him, ver. 11. *The Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?* (1.) The common people longed to see him there, that they might have their curiosity gratified with the sight of his person and miracles. They did not think it worth while to go to him in Galilee, though if they had they would not have lost their labour, but they hope the feast will bring him to Jerusalem, and then they shall see. If an opportunity of acquaintance with Christ, come to their door, they can take it well enough. They sought him at the feast. When we attend upon God in his holy ordinances, we should seek Christ in them, seek him at the gospel feasts. And those who should see Christ at a feast, must seek him there. Or, (2.) Perhaps it was his enemies that were thus waiting an opportunity to seize him, and if possible to give an effectual stop to his progress. They said, *Where is he?* *ἔστιν ἐκεῖ*, *Where is that fellow?* Thus scornfully and contemptibly do they speak of him. Or it intimates how full their hearts were with thoughts of him, and their town with talk of him, they needed not name him. When they should have welcomed the feast as an opportunity of serving God, they were glad of it as an opportunity of persecuting Christ. Thus Saul hoped to slay David at the new-moon, *1 Sam. xx. 27*. Those that seek opportunity to sin in solemn assemblies for religious worship, profane God's ordinances to the last degree, and defy him upon his own ground; it is like striking within the verge of the court.

2. The people differed much in their sentiments concerning him, ver. 12. *There was much murmuring, or muttering rather, among the people concerning him*. The enmity of the rulers against Christ, and their enquiries after him, made him to be so much the more talked of and observed among the people. This ground the gospel of Christ hath got by the opposition made to it, that it has been the more enquired into, and by being every where spoken against, it has come to be every where spoken of, and by that means

means has been spread the further, and the merits of his cause have been the more *searched into*. This murmuring was not *against* Christ, but concerning him: some murmured at the rulers, because they did not countenance and encourage him; others murmured at them, because they did not silence and restrain them. Some murmured that he had so great an interest in Galilee; others, that he had so little interest in Jerusalem. Note, Christ and his religion have been, and will be the subject of much controversy and debate, *Luke* xii. 51, 52. If all would agree to entertain Christ as they ought, there would be perfect peace, but when some receive the light, and others resolve against it, there will be murmuring. *The bones in the valley*, while they were *dead and dry*, lay quiet, but when it was said unto them, *live*, there was a *noise*, and a *shaking*, *Ezek.* xxxvii. 7. But the noise and encounter of liberty and business, are preferable sure to the silence and agreement of a prison.

Now what were the sentiments of the people concerning him?

1. Some said, *he is a good man*. This was a truth, but it was far short of being the whole truth. He was not only a *good man*, but more than a man, he was the *Son of God*. Many that have no ill thoughts of Christ, yet have low thoughts of him: and scarce honour him, even when they speak well of him because they do not say enough: yet indeed it was his honour, and the reproach of those that persecuted him, that they who would not believe him to be the Messiah, yet could not own but he was a *good man*.

2. Others said, *nay, but he deceiveth the people*, and if that had been true he had been a very ill man. The doctrine he preached was sound, and could not be contested; his miracles real, and could not be disproved; his conversation manifestly holy and good, and yet it must be taken for granted, notwithstanding that there is some undiscovered cheat at the bottom, because it is the interest of the chief priests to oppose him and run him down. Such murmuring as there was among the Jews concerning Christ, there is still among us; the Socinians say, *he is a good man*, and further they say not. The *deists* will not allow this, but say, *he deceived the people*. Thus some diminish him, others abuse him, but *great is the truth*.

3. They were frightened by their superiors from speaking much of him. *ver. 13. No man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews*. Either, 1. They durst not openly speak well of him. Whilst any one was at liberty to censure and reproach him, none durst vindicate him. Or, 2. They durst not speak at all of him openly. Because nothing could justly be said *against* him, they would not suffer any thing to be said *of* him. It was a crime to name him. Thus many have aimed to suppress truth, under colour of silencing disputes about it, and would have all talk of religion hushed, in hopes thereby to bury in oblivion religion itself.

14. ¶ Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. 15. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knowest this man letters, having never learned? 16. Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. 17. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. 18. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. 19. Did not Moses give you the law and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me? 20. The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? 21. Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. 22. Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath-day circumsise a man. 23. If a man on the sabbath-day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath-day? 24. Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. 25. Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? 26. But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? 27. Howbeit we know this man, whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is. 28. Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying; Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. 29. But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me. 30. Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. 31. And many of the people believed on him, and said when Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done? 32. ¶ The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and chief priests sent officers to take him. 33. Then said Jesus unto them. Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. 34. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come. 36. Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? 36. What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.

Here is, 1. Christ's public preaching in the temple, *ver. 14. He went up into the temple, and taught*, according to his custom, when he was at Jerusalem. His business was to preach the gospel of the kingdom, and he

did it in every place of concourse. His sermon is not recorded, because probably it was to the same purpose with the sermons he had preached in Galilee, which were recorded by the other evangelists. For the gospel is the same to the *plain* and to the *polite*. But that which is observable here is, that it was *about the midst of the feast*; the fourth or fifth day of the eight. Whether he did not come up to Jerusalem till the middle of the feast, or whether he came up at the beginning, but kept private till now, is not certain. But, *Query*. Why did he not go to the temple *sooner* to preach? *Answer*, 1. Because the people would have more leisure to hear him, and it might be hoped would be better disposed to hear him, when they had spent some days in their booths, as they did at the feast of tabernacles. 2. Because he would choose to appear then, when both his friends and his enemies had done looking for him; and to give a specimen of the method he would observe in his appearances, which is to come at mid-night, *Matt.* xxv. 6. But why did he appear thus publicly now? Surely it was to *shame* his persecutors, the chief priests and elders, (1.) By shewing that though they were very bitter against him, yet he did not fear them, nor their power. See *Isa.* l. 7, 8. (2.) By taking their work out of their hands. Their office was to teach the people in the temple, and particularly at the *feast of tabernacles*, *Neh.* viii. 17, 18. But they either did not teach them at all, or taught for doctrines the commandments of men, and therefore he goes up to the temple and teaches the people. When the shepherds of Israel made a prey of the flock, it was time for the chief shepherd to appear, as was promised, *Ezek.* xxxiv. 22, 23. *Matt.* iii. 1.

2. His discourse with the Jews hereupon; and the conference is reducible to four heads.

First, Concerning his doctrine. See here,

1. How the Jews admired it, *ver. 15. They marvelled, saying, How knowest this man letters, having never learned?* Observe here, 1. That our Lord Jesus was not educated in the schools of the prophets, or at the feet of the rabbins; not only did not travel for learning, as the philosophers did, but did not make any use of the schools and academies in his own country. Moses was taught the learning of the Egyptians, but Christ was not taught so much as the learning of the Jews; having received the Spirit without measure he needed not receive any knowledge from man, or by man. At the time of Christ's appearing, learning flourished both in the Roman empire and in the Jewish church, more than in any age before or since, and in such a time of inquiry Christ chose to establish his religion, not in an illiterate age, lest it should look like a design to impose upon the world; yet he himself studied not the learning then in vogue. 2. That Christ *had letters*, though he had never learned them; was mighty in the scriptures though he never had any doctor of the law for his tutor. It is necessary Christ's ministers should have learning, as he had, and since they cannot expect to have it as he had it, by inspiration, they must take pains to get it in an ordinary way. 3. That Christ having learning though he had not been taught it, made him truly great and wonderful; The Jews speak of it here with wonder. 1. Some it is likely took notice of it to his honour; he that had no human learning, and yet so far excelled all that had, certainly must be endued with a divine knowledge. 2. Others probably mentioned it in diminution and contempt of him; whatever he *seems* to have, he cannot really have any true learning, for he never was at the university, nor took his degree. 3. Some perhaps suggested that he had got his learning by magic arts, or some unlawful means or other; since they knew not how he could be a scholar, they will think him a conjuror.

2. What he asserted concerning it; three things,

1. That his doctrine is divine, *ver. 16. My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me*. They were offended, because he undertook to teach, though he had never learned. In answer to which he tells them, that his doctrine was such as was not to be learned, for it was not the product of human thought and natural powers enlarged and elevated by reading and conversation, but it was a divine revelation. As God equal with the Father, he might truly have said, *my doctrine is mine*, and *his that sent me*; but being now in his estate of humiliation, and being as mediator God's servant, it was more congruous to say, *my doctrine is not mine*, not mine only, or mine originally, as man and mediator, but *his that sent me*: it doth not centre in myself, or lead ultimately to myself, but to him that sent me; God had promised concerning the great prophet, that he would put his word into his mouth, *Deut.* xviii. 18. to which Christ seems here to refer. Note, It is the comfort of those who embrace Christ's doctrine, and the condemnation of those who reject it, that it is a divine doctrine, it is of God, and not of man.

2. That the most competent judges of the truth and divine authority of Christ's doctrine, are those that with a sincere and upright heart desire and endeavour to do the will of God, *ver. 17. If any man be willing to do the will of God, hath his will melted into the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself*. Observe here,

(1.) What the question is concerning the doctrine of Christ, *whether it be of God or no*; whether the gospel be a divine revelation or an imposture. Christ himself was willing to have his doctrine enquired into, whether it were of God or no, much more should his ministers; and we are concerned to examine what grounds we go upon, for if we be deceived, we are miserably deceived.

(2.) Who are likely to succeed in this search; those that *do the will of God*, at least that are desirous to do it. Now see, (1.) Who they are that *will do the will of God*: they are such as are impartial in their enquiries concerning the will of God, and are not biased by any lust or interest; and such as are resolved by the grace of God, when they find out what the will of God is, to conform to it. They are such as have an honest principle of regard to God, and are truly desirous to glorify and please him. (2.) Whence it is that such a one shall know of the truth of Christ's doctrine. 1. Christ has promised to give knowledge to such; he hath said, *he shall know*, and he can give an understanding. Those who improve the light they have, and carefully live up to it, shall be secured by divine grace from destructive mistakes. 2. They are disposed and prepared to receive that knowledge. He that is inclined to submit to the rules of the divine law, is disposed to admit the rays of divine light. To him that has shall be given; those have a good understanding, that do his commandments, *Psal.* cxi. 10. Those who resemble God, are most likely to understand him.

1. That hereby it appeared Christ as a teacher did not speak of himself because he did not seek himself, *ver. 18*.

3. See here the character of a deceiver; he *seeketh his own glory*, which is a sign he *speaks of himself*, as the false christs and false prophets did. Here is the description of the cheat, they *speak of themselves*, and have no commissions or instructions from God; no warrant but their own will, no inspiration, but their own imagination, their own politics and artifices. Ambassadors *speak not of themselves*; those ministers disclaim that character who glory in this, that they *speak of themselves*. But see the discovery of the cheat; by this their pretensions are improved, they consult purely their own glory; self-seekers are self-speakers. They who speak from God, will speak for God, and for his glory, they who aim at their own preferment and interest, make it to appear they had no commission from God.

2. See the contrary character Christ gave of himself and his doctrine.

He that seeketh his glory that sent him, as I do, makes it to appear that he is true. (1.) He was sent of God. Those teachers, and those only who are sent of God, are to be received and entertained by us. Those that bring a divine message, must prove a divine mission, either by special revelation or regular institution. (2.) He sought the glory of God. It was both the tendency of his doctrine and the tenor of his whole conversation, to glorify God. (3.) This was a proof that he was true, and there was no unrighteousness in him. False teachers are most unrighteous; they are unjust to God, whose name they abuse, and unjust to the souls of men whom they impose upon: There cannot be a greater piece of unrighteousness than this. But Christ made it appear that he was true, that he was really what he said he was, that there was no unrighteousness in him; no falsehood in his doctrine, no fallacy or fraud in his dealings with us.

Secondly, They discourse concerning the crime that was laid to his charge for curing the impotent man, and bidding him carry his bed on the sabbath day, for which they had formerly persecuted him, and which was still the pretence of their enmity to him.

1. He argues against them by way of *recrimination*, convicting them of far worse practices, *ver. 19*. How could they for shame censure him for a breach of the law of Moses, when they themselves were such notorious breakers of it? Did not Moses give you the law? And it was their privilege that they had a law; no nation had such a law; but it was their wickedness that none of them kept the law; that they rebelled against it, and lived contrary to it: Many that have the law given them, when they have it do not keep it. Their neglect of the law was universal, none of you keep it; neither those of them that were in *posts of honour*, who should have been most knowing, nor those that were in *posts of subjection*, that should have been most obedient. They boasted of the law, and pretended a zeal for it, and were enraged at Christ for seeming to transgress it, and yet none of them kept it; like those that say they are for the church, and yet never go to church. It was an aggravation of their wickedness in persecuting Christ for breaking the law, that they themselves did not keep it: *None of you keepeth the law*, why then go ye about to kill me for not keeping it? Note, Those are commonly most censorious of others, who are most faulty themselves. Thus hypocrites that are forward to pull a mote out of their brother's eye, are not aware of a beam in their own. *Why go ye about to kill me?* Some make this to be the instance of their not keeping the law; *ye keep not the law*, if ye did, you would understand yourselves better than to go about to kill me for doing a good work. Those that support themselves and their interest by persecution and violence, whatever they pretend, (though they may call themselves *custodes utriusque tabule*) are not keepers of the law of God. Chemnitzius understands this as a reason why it is time to supersede the law of Moses by the gospel, because the law was found insufficient to restrain sin; Moses gave you the law, but you do not keep it, nor are kept by it from the greatest wickedness; there is therefore need of a clearer light and better law to be brought in, why then do you aim to kill me for introducing it?

Here the people rudely interrupted him in his discourse, and contradicted what he said, *ver. 20*. *Thou hast a devil; who goes about to kill thee?* This speaks, 1. The *good opinion* they had of their rulers, who they think would never attempt to ill a thing as to kill him; no, such a veneration they had for their elders and chief priests, that they would swear for them they would do no harm to an innocent man. Probably the rulers had their little emissaries among the people who suggested this to them; many deny that wickedness which at the same time they are contriving. 2. The *ill opinion* they had of our Lord Jesus, *thou hast a devil*, thou art possessed with a lying spirit, and art an *ill man* for saying so; so some; or rather thou art a melancholy, and art a *weak man*; thou frightenest thyself with causeless fears, as hypochondriacal people use to do. Not only open phrenzies, but silent melancholies were then commonly imputed to the power of Satan: Thou art crazed, hast a disordered brain. Let us not think it strange if the best of men be put under the worst of characters.

To this vile calumny our Saviour returns no direct answer, but seems as if he took no notice of it. Note, Those who would be like Christ must put up affronts, and pass by the indignities and injuries done them; must not regard them, much less resent them, and least of all revenge them; *I as a deaf man heard not*. When Christ was reviled he reviled not again.

2. He argues by way of appeal and vindication.

1. He appeals to their own sentiments of this miracle, *ver. 21*. *I have done one work and ye all marvel*. Ye cannot choose but marvel at it as truly great, and altogether supernatural; you must all own it to be marvellous. Or, Though I have done but one work that ye have any colour to find fault with, yet you marvel, i. e. you are offended and displeased as if I had been guilty of some heinous or enormous crime.

2. He appeals to their own practices in other instances. *I have done one work on the sabbath*, and it was done easily with a word's speaking, and you all marvel, you make a mighty strange thing of it, that a religious man should dare to do such a thing, whereas you yourselves many a time do that which is a much more servile work on the sabbath day in the case of circumcision; if it be lawful for you, nay, and your duty to circumcise a child on the sabbath day when it happens to be on the eighth day, as no doubt it is, much more was it lawful and good for me to heal a diseased man on that day. Observe,

1. The rise and original of circumcision. *Moses gave you circumcision*, gave you the law concerning. Here, 1. Circumcision is said to be given you, and *ver. 23*, they are said to receive it; it was not imposed upon them as a yoke, but conferred upon them as a favour. Note, The ordinances of God, and particularly those which are of the seals covenant, are gifts given to men, and are to be received as such. 2. Moses is said to give it because it was part of that law which was given by Moses; yet as Christ said of the manna, *chap. vi. 32*. Moses did not give it them, but God; nay, and it was not of Moses first, but of the fathers, *ver. 22*. Though it was incorporated into the Mosaic institution, yet it was ordained long before, for it was a seal of the righteousness of faith, and therefore commenced with the promise four hundred and thirty years before, *Gal. iii. 17*. The church-membership of believers and their seed was not of Moses or his law, and therefore did not fall with it; but was of the fathers, belonged to the patriarchal church, and was part of that blessing of Abraham which was to come upon the Gentiles, *Gal. iii. 14*.

2. The respect had to the law of circumcision above that of the sabbath, in the constant practice of the Jewish church. The Jewish casuists frequently take notice of it. *Circumcisio & ejus sanatio pellit sabbatum*; so that if a child was born one sabbath day, it was without fail circumcised the next. If then when the sabbath rest was more strictly insisted on, yet those works were allowed which were in *ordine ad spiritualia*, for the keeping up of religion, much more are they allowed now under the gospel, when the stress is laid more upon the sabbath work.

3. The inference Christ draws from hence in justification of himself, and of what he had done, *ver. 23*. *A man-child on the sabbath-day receives circumcision, that the law of circumcision might not be broken*, or, as the margin reads it, *without breaking the law*, namely, of the sabbath. Divine commands must be construed so as to agree with each other. Now, if this be allowed

by yourselves how unreasonable are you, who are angry with me because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? *ἵνα ὁλόκληρος*; the word is used only here, from *χόλας, žel*. They were angry at him with the greatest indignation; it was a spiteful anger, anger with gall in it. Note, It is very absurd and unreasonable for us to condemn others for that which we justify ourselves in. Observe the comparison Christ here makes between their *circumcising a child* and his *healing a man* on the sabbath day. 1. Circumcision was but a ceremonial institution; it was of the fathers indeed, but not from the beginning; but what Christ did was a good work by the law of nature, a more excellent law than that which made circumcision a good work. 2. Circumcision was a bloody ordinance, and made sore; but what Christ did was healing and made whole. The law works pain, and if that work may be done on the sabbath day, much more a gospel work, which works peace. 3. Especially considering that whereas when they had circumcised a child, yet their care was only to heal up that part which was circumcised, which might be done, and yet the child remain under other illnesses. Christ had made this man every whit whole, *ὅλος ἀρρώστους ὄντα*, I have made the whole man healthful and sound; the whole body was healed, for the disease affected the whole body; and it was a perfect cure, such as left no relics of the disease behind; nay Christ not only healed his body, but his soul too, by that admonition, *Go, and sin no more*, and so indeed made the whole man sound, for the soul is the man. Circumcision indeed was intended for the good of the soul, and to make the whole man as it should be, but they had perverted it, and turned it into a mere carnal ordinance; but Christ accompanied his outward cures with inward grace, and so made them sacramental, and healed the whole man.

He concludes this argument with that rule, *ver. 24*. *Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment*. This may be applied, either, (1.) In particular to this work which they quarrelled with as a violation of the law. Be not partial in your judgment; judge not, *κατ' ὄψιν*, with respect of persons; knowing as the Hebrew phrase is, *Deut. i. 17*. It is contrary to the law of justice, as well as charity, to censure those who differ in opinion from us as transgressors, in taking that liberty, which yet in those of our own party, and way, and opinion we allow of; as it is also to commend that in some as necessary strictness and severity, which in others we condemn as imposition and persecution. Or, (2.) In general, to Christ's person and preaching, which they were offended at and prejudiced against. Those things that are false and designed to impose upon men, commonly appear best, when they are judged of according to the outward appearance, they appear most plausible, *prima facie*. This was it that gained the Pharisees such an interest and reputation, that they appeared right unto men, *Matt. xxiii. 27, 28*, and men judged of them by that appearance, and so were sadly mistaken in them. But, saith Christ, be not too confident that all are real saints who are seeming ones. And with reference to himself, his outward appearance was far short of his real dignity and excellency, for he took upon him the form of a servant, *Phil. ii. 7*, in the likeness of sinful flesh, *Rom. viii. 3*, had no form or comeliness, *Isa. liii. 2*. So that they who undertook to judge whether he were the Son of God or no, by his outward appearance, were not likely to judge righteous judgment. The Jews expected the outward appearance of the Messiah to be pompous and magnificent, and attended with all the ceremonies of secular grandeur; and judging of Christ by that rule, their judgment was from first to last, a continual mistake, for the kingdom of Christ was not to be of this world, not to come with observation. If a divine power accompanied him, and God bore him witness, and the scriptures were fulfilled in him, though his appearance was never so mean, they ought to receive him and to judge by faith, and not by the sight of the eye. See *Isa. xi. 3*, and *1 Sam. xvi. 7*. Christ and his doctrine and doings, desire nothing but righteous judgment; if truth and justice may but pass the sentence, Christ and his cause will carry the day. We must not judge concerning any by their outward appearance, not by their titles, the figure they make in the world, and their flustering shew, but by their intrinsic worth, and the gifts and graces of God's Spirit in them.

Thirdly, Christ discoursed with them here concerning himself, whence he came, and whether he was going, *ver. 25-26*.

1. Whence he came, *ver. 25-31*. In the account of this, observe,

1. The objection concerning this, started by some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who seem to have been of all others most prejudiced against him, *ver. 25*. One would think that they who lived at the fountain head of knowledge and religion, should have been most ready to receive the Messiah; but it proved quite contrary; those that have plenty of the means of knowledge and grace, if they are not made better by them, are commonly made worse; and our Lord Jesus as often met with the least welcome from those that one would expect the best from. But it was not without some just cause, that it came into a proverb, *The nearer the church, the farther from God*.

These people of Jerusalem shewed their ill-will to Christ, (1.) By their reflecting on the rulers because they let him alone. *Is not this he whom they seek to kill?* the multitude of the people that came up out of the country to the feast, did not suspect there was any design on foot against him, and therefore they said, *Who goes about to kill thee?* *ver. 20*. But they of Jerusalem knew the plot, and irritated their rulers to put it in execution. *Is not this he whom they seek to kill?* Why do they not do it then? Who hinders them? They say they have a mind to get him out of the way and yet lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing to him; do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? *ver. 26*. Here they slyly and maliciously insinuate two things to exasperate the rulers against Christ, when indeed they needed no spur. 1. That by conniving at his preaching, they brought their authority into contempt. Must a man that is condemned by the Sanhedrin as a deceiver, be permitted to speak boldly, without any check or contradiction? This makes their sentence to be but *brutum fulmen*; if our rulers will suffer themselves to be thus-trampled upon, they may thank themselves if none stand in awe of them and their laws. Note, The worst of persecutions have often been carried on under colour of the necessary support of authority and government. 2. That hereby they brought their judgment into suspicion; *Do they know that this is the Christ?* It is spoken ironically. How came they to change their mind? What new discovery have they light on? They give people occasion to think that they believe him to be the Christ, and are concerned to act vigorously against him to clear themselves from the suspicion. Thus the rulers who had made the people enemies to Christ, made them seven times more the children of hell than themselves, *Matt. xxiii. 15*. When religion and the profession of Christ's name are out of fashion, and consequently out of repute, many are strongly tempted to persecute and oppose them only that they may not be thought to favour them and incline to them. And for this reason apostates, and the degenerate offspring of good parents, have been sometimes worse than others, as it were to wipe off the stain of their profession. It was strange the rulers thus irritated did not seize Christ; but his hour was not yet come; and God can tie men's hands to admiration, though he did not turn their hearts.

(2.) By their exception against his being the Christ; in which appears more malice than matter, *ver. 27*. If the rulers think him to be the Christ, we neither can nor will believe him to be so, for we have this argument against it, that we know this man, whence he is, but when Christ comes, no man knows

knows whence he is. Here is a fallacy in the argument, for the propositions are not both *ad idem*. (1.) If they speak of his *divine nature*, it is true, that when Christ comes *no man knows whence he is*, for he is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, who was *without defect, and his goings forth have been of old from everlasting*, Micah v. 2. But then it was not true, that as for this man they knew whence he was, for they knew not his *divine nature* nor how *the word was made flesh*. (2.) If they speak of his *human nature*, it was true that they knew whence he was, who was his mother, and where he was bred up; but then it was false, that ever it was said of the Messiah, that none should know whence he was, for it was known before *where he should be born*, Matt. ii. 4, 5. Observe. 1. How they *despised him*, because they knew whence he was. Familiarity breeds contempt, and we are apt to disdain the use of those whom we know the *rise of*; Christ's own received him not, because he was *their own*, for which very reason they should the rather have loved him; and been thankful that their nation and their age was honoured with his appearance. 2. How they endeavoured unjustly to fasten the ground of their prejudice upon the scriptures, as if they countenanced them, when there was no such thing. Therefore people err concerning Christ, because they *know not the scriptures*.

2. Christ's answer to this objection, ver. 28, 29. He spoke freely and boldly, he *cried in the temple, as he taught*, he spoke this louder than the rest of his discourse, 1. To express his earnestness, being *grieved for the hardness of their hearts*; there may be a vehemency in contending for the truth, where yet there is no intemperate heat or passion. We may instruct gainsayers with warmth, and yet with *meekness*. 2. The priests and those that were prejudiced against him, did not come near enough to hear his preaching, and therefore he must speak louder than ordinary what he will have them to hear. Whoever has ears to hear let him hear this.

Now Christ's answer to their cavil is,

1. By way of concession, granting that they did, or might know his original as to the flesh; *ye both know me, and know whence I am*. You know I am of your own nation, and one of yourselves. It is no disparagement to the doctrine of Christ, that there is that in it which is level to the capacities of the meanest; plain truths discovered even by nature's light, of which we may say we know whence they are: *ye know me*, i. e. ye think ye know me; but ye are mistaken; ye take me to be the carpenter's son, and born at Nazareth, but it is not so.

2. By way of negation, denying that that which they did see in him, and know of him, was all that was to be known, and therefore if they looked no further than that they judged by the outward appearance only. They knew whence he came perhaps, and where he had his birth, but he will tell them what they knew not, *from whom he came*. 1. That he did not come of himself; that he did not *come* without sending, nor come as a private person, but with a public character. 2. That he was sent of his Father; this is twice mentioned, *He hath sent me*. And again, *He hath sent me*, to say what I say, and do what I do. This he was himself well assured of, and therefore knew that his Father would bear him out; and it is well for us that we are assured of it too, that we may with holy confidence go to God by him. 3. That he was *from his Father*, *ex patre suo*, not only sent from him, as a servant from his master, but from him by eternal generation, as a son from his father, by essential emanation, as the beams from the sun. 4. *That the father who sent him is true*; he had promised to give the Messiah, and though the Jews had forfeited the promise, yet he that made the promise is true, and has performed it: he had promised that the Messiah should see his seed, and be successful in his undertaking; and though the generality of the Jews reject him and his gospel, yet he is true, and will fulfil the promise in the calling of the Gentiles. 5. That these unbelieving Jews did not know the Father. *He that sent me, whom ye knew not*. There is much ignorance of God, even with many that have a form of knowledge; and the true reason why people reject Christ, is because they do not know God; for there is such a harmony of the divine attributes in the work of redemption, and such an admirable agreement between natural and revealed religion, that the right knowledge of the former would not only admit but introduce the latter. 6. Our Lord Jesus was intimately acquainted with the Father that sent him; but I know him. He knew him so well, that he was not at all in doubt concerning his mission from him, but perfectly assured of that; nor at all in the dark concerning the work he had to do, but perfectly apprized of that, Matt. xi. 27.

3. The provocation which this gave to his enemies, who therefore hated him because he told them the truth, ver. 30. *They sought therefore to take him*, to lay violent hands on him, not only to do him a mischief, but some way or other to be the death of him; but by the restraint of an invisible power it was prevented, nobody touched him, *because his hour was not yet come*; that was not their reason why they did it not, but God's reason why he hindered them from doing it. Note, (1.) The faithful preachers of the truths of God, though they behave themselves with never so much prudence and meekness, yet must expect to be hated and persecuted by those who think themselves tormented by their testimony, Rev. xi. 10. (2.) God has wicked men in a chain, and whatever mischief they would do, yet they can do no more than God will suffer them to do. The malice of persecutors is impotent, even then when it is most impetuous, and when Satan fills their hearts, yet God ties their hands. (3.) God's servants are sometimes wonderfully protected by indiscernable, unaccountable means: Their enemies do not do the mischief they designed, and yet neither they themselves, nor any one else can tell why they do not. (4.) Christ had his hour set, which was to put a period to his day and work on earth, and so have all his people, and all his ministers; and till that hour comes, the attempts of their enemies against them are ineffectual, and their day shall be lengthened as long as their Master has any work for them to do; nor can all the powers of hell and earth prevail against them, until they have finished their testimony.

4. The good effect which Christ's discourse had notwithstanding this upon some of his hearers, ver. 31. *Many of the people believed on him*. As he was set for the fall of some, so for the rising again of others: Even there, where the gospel meets with opposition, yet there may be a great deal of good done, 1 Thess. ii. 2. Observe here,

1. Who they were that believed; not a few, but many, more than one would have expected when the stream ran so strong the other way. But these many were of the people, *ex populo*, of the multitude, the crowd, the inferior sort, the mob, the rabble, some would have called them. We must not measure the prosperity of the gospel by its success among the great ones, nor must ministers fix their labour in vain, though none but the poor, and those of no figure receive the gospel, 1 Cor. i. 26.

2. What induced them to believe; the miracles which he did. Which were not only the accomplishment of the Old Testament prophecies, Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6. but an argument of a divine power. He that had an ability to do that which none but God can do, control and over-rule the powers of nature, no doubt had authority to enact that which none but God can enact, a law that shall bind conscience, and a covenant that shall give life.

3. How weak their faith was; they do not positively assert, as the Samaritans did, *This is indeed the Christ*, but they only argue; *When Christ comes will he do more miracles than these?* They take it for granted that Christ

will come, and when he comes will do many miracles; and is not this he then? In him we see, though not all that worldly pomp we have *expected*, yet all that divine power we have *believed* the Messiah should appear in, and therefore why may not this be he? They believe it, but have not courage to own it. Note, Even weak faith may be true faith, and so accounted, so accepted by the Lord Jesus, who *despises not the day of small things*.

2. Whither he was going, ver. 32—36. Where observe,

1. The design of the Pharisees and chief priests against him, ver. 32.

1. The provocation given them was, they had information brought them by their spies, who insinuated themselves into the conversation of the people, and gathered stories to carry to their jealous masters, that the people murmured such things concerning him; that there were many who had a respect and value for him, notwithstanding all they had done to make him odious. Though the people did but whisper these things, and had not courage to speak out, yet the Pharisees were enraged at it. The equity of that government is justly suspected by others, which is so suspicious of itself, as to take notice of or be influenced by the secret various and uncertain mutterings of the common people. The Pharisees valued themselves very much upon the respects of the people, and were sensible that if Christ did thus increase they must decrease.

2. The project they laid hereupon was to seize Jesus, and take him into custody. They sent officers to take him, not to take up those who murmured concerning him and frighten them; no, the most effectual way to disperse the flock, is to smite the shepherd. The Pharisees seem to be the ringleaders in this prosecution, but they as such had no power, and therefore they got the chief priests, the judges of the ecclesiastical court, to join with them, who were ready enough to do so. The Pharisees were the great pretenders to learning, and the chief priests to sanctity. As the world by wisdom knew not God, but the greatest philosophers were guilty of the greatest blunders in natural religion; so the Jewish church by their wisdom knew not Christ, but their greatest rabbins were the greatest fools concerning him, nay, they were the most inveterate enemies to him. Those wicked rulers had their officers, officers of their court, church-officers, whom they employed to take Christ, and who were ready to go on their errand, though it was an ill errand. If Saul's footmen will not go, he has a herdsman, that will turn and fall upon the priests of the Lord, 1 Sam. xxii. 18.

2. The discourse of our Lord Jesus hereupon, ver. 33, 34. *Yet a little while I am with you, and then I go to him that sent me; ye shall seek me, and ye shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come*. These words, like the pillar of cloud and fire, have a bright side, and a dark side.

1. They have a bright side towards our Lord Jesus himself, and speak abundance of comfort to him and all his faithful followers, that are exposed to difficulties and dangers for his sake. Three things Christ here comforted himself with.

(1.) That he had but a little time to continue here in this troublesome world. He sees he is never likely to have a quiet day among them, but the best of it is, his warfare will shortly be accomplished, and then he shall be no more in this world, John xvii. 11. whoever we are with in this world, friends or foes, it is but a little while we shall be with them. And it is matter of comfort to those who are in the world, but not of it, and therefore are bated by it and sick of it, that they shall not be in it always, they shall not be in it long. We must be a while with those that are pricking briars and grieving thorns, but thanks be to God, it is but a little while, and we shall be out of their reach. Our days being evil, it is well they are few.

(2.) That when he should quit this troublesome world, he should go to him that sent him. I go. Not I am driven away by force, but I voluntarily go, having finished my embassy, I return to him on whose errand I came. Then, when I have done my work with you, then, and not till then, I go to him that sent me, and will receive me, will prefer me, as ambassadors are when they return. Their rage against him would not only hinder him from, but hasten him to the glory and joy that was set before him. Let those who suffer for Christ, comfort themselves with this, that they have a God to go to, and are going to him, going apace, to be for ever with him.

(3.) That though they persecuted him here wherever he went, yet that none of their persecutions could follow him to heaven. *Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me*. It appears by their enmity to his followers when he was gone, that if they could have reached him, they would have persecuted him, but ye cannot come into that temple, as ye do into this. Where I am, i. e. where I then shall be; but he expresseth it thus, because even when he was on earth by his divine nature and divine affections, he was in heaven, John iii. 13. Or it notes, that he should be so soon there, that he was as good as there already. Note, It adds to the happiness of glorified saints, that they are out of the reach of the devil, and all his wicked instruments.

2. These words have a black and dark side towards these wicked Jews that hated and persecuted Christ. They now longed to be rid of him. Away with him from the earth; but let them know.

(1.) That according to their choice, so should their doom be. They were industrious to drive him from them, and their sin shall be their punishment, he will not trouble them long, yet a little while and he will depart from them. It is just with God to forsake those that think his presence a burden. They that are weary of Christ need no more to make them miserable than to have their wish.

(2.) That they would certainly repent their choice when it was too late.

1. They should in vain seek the presence of the Messiah. *Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me*. Ye shall expect the Christ to come, but your eyes shall fail with looking for him, and ye shall never find him. They who rejected the true Messiah when he did come, were justly abandoned to a miserable and endless expectation of one that should never come. Or, it may refer to the final rejection of sinners, from the favour and grace of Christ at the great day; those who now see Christ shall find him, but the day is coming, when those who now refuse him, shall seek him, and shall not find him. See Prov. i. 28. they will in vain cry, *Lord, Lord, open to us*. Or, perhaps these words might be fulfilled in the despair of some of those Jews, who possibly might be convinced and not converted, who would wish in vain to see Christ, and to hear him preach again; but the day of grace is over. Luke xvii. 22. yet this is not all. 2. They should in vain expect a place in heaven. Where I am, and where all believers shall be with me, thither ye cannot come: not only because they are excluded by the just and irreversible sentence of the judge, and the sword of the angel at every gate of the new Jerusalem, to keep the way of the tree of life against those who have no right to enter, but because they are disabled by their own iniquity and infidelity; ye cannot come because ye will not. Those that hate to be where Christ is, in his word and ordinances on earth, are very unfit to be where he is in his glory in heaven; for indeed heaven would be no heaven to them, such are the antipathies of an un sanctified soul to the felicity of that state.

3. Their descent upon this discourse, ver. 35, 36. *They said among themselves, whither will he go?* See here,

(1.) Their wilful ignorance and blindness. He had expressly said whither he would go, to him that sent him, to his Father in heaven, and yet they ask, *Whither will ye go?* and what manner of saying is this? None so blind

blind as those that will not see, that will not heed. Christ's sayings are plain to him that understandeth, and difficult only to those that are minded to quarrel.

(2.) Their daring contempt of Christ's threatenings. Instead of trembling at that terrible word, *ye shall seek me, and not find me*, which speaks the utmost degree of misery they banter it and make a jest of it, as those sinners that *mock at fear, and are not affrighted*, Isa. v. 19. Amos v. 18. *Let him make speed. But be ye not mockers, lest your hands be made strong.*

(3.) Their inveterate malice and rage against Christ. All they dreaded in his departure was, that he would be out of the reach of their power, *Whither will he go, that we shall not find him?* If he be above ground we will have him; we will leave no place unsearched, as Ahab in quest of Elijah, 1 Kings xviii. 10.

(4.) Their proud disdain of the Gentiles, whom they here call the *dispersed of the Gentiles*; meaning either the Jews that were scattered abroad among the Greeks, James i. 1. 1 Pet. i. 1. will he go and make an interest among those silly people? Or, the Gentiles *dispersed* over the world, in distinction from the Jews, who were incorporated into one church and nation, will he make his court to them?

(5.) Their jealousy of the least intimation of favour to the Gentiles; will he go and *teach the Gentiles*? Will he carry his doctrine to them? Perhaps they had heard of some items of respect shewed by him to the Gentiles, as in his sermon at Nazareth, and in the case of the centurion and the woman of Canaan, and there was nothing they dreaded more than the *comprehension* of the Gentiles. So common is it for those who have lost the power of religion to be very jealous for the monopoly of the name. They now made a jest of his going to *teach the Gentiles*, but not long after he did it in good earnest by his apostles and ministers, and gathered those *dispersed* people sorely to the grief of the Jews, Rom. x. 19. So true is that of Solomon, *The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him.*

37. ¶ In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) 40. ¶ Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. 41. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? 42. Hath not the Scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? 43. So there was a division among the people because of him. 44. And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

In these verses we have,

First, Christ's discourse, with the explication of it, ver. 37, 38, 39. It is likely these are only short hints of what he enlarged upon, but they have in them the substance of the whole gospel; here is a *gospel invitation to come to Christ*, and a *gospel promise* of comfort and happiness in him. Now observe,

1. When he made this invitation. *On the last day of the feast of tabernacles, that great day.* The eighth day, which concluded that solemnity, was to be a *holy convocation*, Lev. xxiii. 36. Now on this day Christ published this gospel call. Because, 1. Much people were gathered together, and if the invitation was given to many, it might be hoped some would accept of it, Prov. i. 7. Numerous assemblies give opportunity of doing the more good. 2. The people were now returning to their homes, and he would give them this to carry away with them as his parting word. When a great congregation is to be dismissed, and is about to scatter, as here, it is affecting to think, that in all probability they will never come all together again in this world, and therefore if we can say or do any thing to help them to heaven, that must be the time. It is good to be lively at the close of an ordinance. Christ made this offer *on the last day of the feast*. (1.) To those who had turned a deaf ear to his preaching on the foregoing days of this sacred week; he will try them once more, and if they will yet hear his voice, they shall live. (2.) To those who perhaps might never have such another offer made them, and therefore were concerned to accept of this; it would be half a year before there would be another feast, and in that time they would many of them be in their graves. *Behold now is the accepted time.*

2. How he made this invitation: *Jesus stood and cried*: Which notes, 1. His great earnestness and importunity. His heart was upon it, to bring poor souls in to himself. The erection of his body and the elevation of his voice were indications of the intensity of his mind. Love to souls will make preachers lively. 2. His desire that all might take notice, and take hold of this invitation. *He stood and cried*, that he might the better be heard, for this is what every one that hath ears is concerned to hear. Gospel truth seeks no corners, because it fears no trials. The heathen oracles were delivered clandestinely by them that *peeped and muttered*; but the oracles of the gospel were proclaimed by one that *stood and cried*. How sad is the case of man, that he must be importuned to be happy, and how wonderful the grace of Christ, that he will importune him! *No every one*, Isa. lv. 1.

3. The invitation itself, which is, (1.) Very general; if *any man* thirst, whoever he be, he is invited to Christ. Be he high or low, rich or poor, young or old, bond or free, Jew or Gentile. (2.) Very gracious; if *any man* thirst, let him come to me and drink. If any man desires to be truly and eternally happy, let him apply himself to me, and be ruled by me, and I will undertake to make him so.

(1.) The persons invited are such as *thirst*, which may be understood, either, 1. Of the *indigence* of their cases; either as to their outward condition; if any man be destitute of the comforts of this life, or fatigued with the crosses of it, let his poverty and afflictions draw him to Christ for that peace which the world can neither give nor take away: Or, as to their inward state, if any man want spiritual blessings, he may be supplied with me. Or, 2. Of the *inclination* of their souls and their desires towards a spiritual happiness. If any man hunger and thirst after righteousness, that is, truly desire the good will of God towards him, and the good work of God in him.

(2.) The invitation itself, *let him come to me*. Let him not go to the ceremonial law, which would neither *purify* the conscience nor *purify* it, and therefore could not make the comers thereunto perfect, Heb. x. 1. Nor

let him go to the heathen philosophy, that doth but beguile men, lead them into a wood, and leave them there; but let him go to *Christ*, admit his doctrine, submit to his discipline, believe in him; come to him as the fountain of living waters, the giver of all comfort.

(3.) The satisfaction promised; let him come and drink, he shall have what he comes for, and abundantly more; shall have that which will not only *refresh*, but *replenish* a soul that desires to be happy.

4. A gracious promise annexed to this gracious call, ver. 38. *He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow—*

1. See here what it is to come to Christ. It is to believe on him, as the scripture hath said; it is to receive and entertain him as he is offered to us in the gospel. We must not frame a Christ according to our fancy, but believe in a Christ according to the scripture.

2. See how thirsty souls that come to Christ shall be made to drink; Israel that believed Moses drank of the rock that followed them, the streams followed; but believers drink of a rock in them, Christ in them; he is in them a well of living water, John iv. 14. Provision is made not only for their present satisfaction, but for their continual, perpetual comfort. Here is, (1.) *Living water*, running water, which the Hebrew language calls *living*, because still in motion. The graces and comforts of the Spirit are compared to *living*, meaning running water, because they are the active quickening principles of spiritual life, and the earnest and beginnings of eternal life. See Jer. ii. 13. (2.) *Rivers* of living water, which notes both plenty and constancy. The comfort flows in both *plentifully* and *constantly* as a river; strong as a stream to bear down the oppositions of doubts and fears. There is a fulness in Christ of grace for grace. (3.) These flow out of *his belly*, i. e. out of his heart and soul. That is the subject of the Spirit's working, and the seat of his government. There *gracious principles* are planted, and out of the heart, in which the Spirit dwells, flow the *issues of life*, Prov. iv. 23. There divine comforts are lodged, and the joy that a stranger doth not intermeddle with. *He that believes, has the witness in himself*, 1 John v. 10. *Sat lucis intus.*

Observe further, where there are *spring*s of grace and comfort in the soul they will send forth *streams*. Out of his belly shall flow rivers. (1.) That grace and comfort will evidence itself. Good affections will produce good actions, and a holy heart will be seen in a holy life; the tree is known by its fruits, and the fountain by its streams. (2.) It will communicate itself for the benefit of others; a good man is a common good. His mouth is a well of life, Prov. x. 11. It is not enough that we drink waters out of our own cistern, that we ourselves take the comfort of the grace given us, but we must let our fountains be dispersed abroad, Prov. v. 15, 16.

Those words, *as the scripture hath said*, seem to refer to some promise in the Old Testament to this purpose, and there are many; as that God would pour out his Spirit, which is a metaphor borrowed from waters, Prov. i. 23. Joel ii. 28. Isa. xlv. 3. Zech. xii. 10. that the dry land should become *spring*s of water, Isa. xli. 18. that there should be rivers in the desert, Isa. xli. 19. that gracious souls should be like a *spring of water*, Isa. lviii. 11. and the church a well of living water, Cant. iv. 15. And here may be an allusion to the waters issuing out of Ezekiel's temple, Ezek. xlvii. 1. compare Rev. xxii. 1. and see Zech. xiv. 8. Dr. Lightfoot and others tell us, it was a custom of the Jews, which they received by tradition, on the last day of the feast of tabernacles, to have a solemnity, which they called *Libatio aquæ*, the pouring out of water. They fetched a golden vessel of water from the pool of Solomon, brought it into the temple with sound of trumpet and other ceremonies, and upon the ascent to the altar, poured it out before the Lord with all possible expressions of joy. Some of their writers make the water to signify the law, and refer to Isa. xli. 3.—lv. 1. Others, the *holy Spirit*. And it is thought our Saviour might here allude to this custom. Believers shall have the comfort, not of a vessel of water fetched from a pool, but of a river flowing from themselves. The joy of the law, and the pouring out of the water, which signified that, is not to be compared with the joy of the gospel in the wells of salvation.

5. Here is the evangelist's exposition of this promise, ver. 39. *This spake he of the Spirit*: not of any outward advantages accruing to believers, as perhaps some misunderstood him, but of the gifts, graces, and comforts of the Spirit: See how scripture is the best interpreter of scripture.

Observe, 1. It is promised to all that believe on Christ, that they shall receive the Holy Ghost. Some received his miraculous gifts, Mark xvi. 17, 18. all receive his sanctifying graces. The gift of the Holy Ghost is one of the great blessings promised in the new covenant, Acts ii. 39. and if promised, no doubt performed to all that have an interest in that covenant.

2. The Spirit dwelling and working in believers, is as a *fountain of living*, running water, out of which plentiful streams flow, cooling and cleansing as water, mollifying and moistening as water, making them fruitful, and others joyful; see John iii. 5. When the apostles spoke so fluently of the things of God as the Spirit gave them utterance, Acts ii. 4. and afterwards preached and wrote the gospel of Christ with such a flood of divine eloquence then this was fulfilled, out of his belly shall flow rivers.

3. This plentiful effusion of the Spirit was yet the matter of a promise; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. See here,

1. That *Jesus was not yet glorified*. It was certain he should be glorified and he was ever worthy of all honour, but he was as yet in a state of humiliation and contempt. He had never forfeited the glory he had before all worlds, nay, he had merited a further glory, and besides his *hereditary* honours, might claim the *achievement* of a mediatorial crown, and yet all this is in reversion. Jesus is now upheld, Isa. xlii. 1. is now satisfied, Isa. liii. 11. is now justified, 1 Tim. iii. 16. but he is not yet glorified. And if Christ must wait for his glory, let not us think much to wait for ours.

2. That the Holy Ghost was not yet given: *ἡ πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἔδωκεν, for the Holy Ghost was not yet*. The spirit of God was from eternity, for in the beginning he moved upon the face of the waters. He was in the Old Testament prophets and saints, and Zachary and Elizabeth were both filled with the Holy Ghost. This therefore must be understood of that eminent, plentiful, and general effusion of the spirit which was promised, Joel ii. 28. and accomplished, Acts ii. 1. The Holy Ghost was not yet given in that visible manner that was intended. If we compare the clear knowledge, and strong grace of the disciples of Christ themselves after that day of Pentecost, with their darkness and weakness before, we shall understand in what sense the Holy Ghost was not yet given; the earnest and first-fruits of the Spirit were given, but the full harvest was not yet come: That which is most properly called the *dispensation of the Spirit* did not yet commence. The Holy Ghost was not yet given in such rivers of living water as should issue forth to water the whole earth, even the gentile world; not in the gifts of tongues, to which perhaps this promise principally refers.

3. That the reason why the Holy Ghost was not yet given was, because *Jesus was not yet glorified*. (1.) The death of Christ is sometimes called his glorification, John xiii. 31. for in his cross he conquered and triumphed. Now the gift of the Holy Ghost was purchased by the blood of Christ, that was the valuable consideration upon which the grant was grounded, and therefore till that price was paid (though many other gifts were bestowed upon

its being secured to be paid) the Holy Ghost was not given. (2.) There was not so much need of the Spirit, while Christ was himself here upon earth, as there was when he was gone; to supply the want of him. (3.) The giving of the Holy Ghost was to be both an answer to Christ's intercession, John xiv. 16. and an act of his dominion; and therefore till he is glorified, and enters upon both these, the Holy Ghost is not given. (4.) The conversion of the Gentiles was the glorifying of Jesus. When certain Greeks began to enquire after Christ, he said, *now is the son of man glorified*, John xii. 23. Now the time for that was not yet come, when the gospel should be propagated in the nations, and therefore there was as yet no occasion for the gifts of tongue, that river of living water. But observe, though the Holy Ghost was not yet given; yet he was promised: it was now the great promise of the Father, Acts i. 4. Though the gifts of Christ's grace are long deferred yet they are well secured; and while we are waiting for the good promised we have the promise to live upon, which shall speak and shall not lie.

Secondly, The consequences of this discourse; what entertainment it met with; in general, it occasioned differences, *ver. 43. There was a division among the people because of him.* There was a schism, so the word is: there were diversities of opinions; and those managed with heat and contention: Various sentiments; and those such as set them at variance. Think we that Christ came to send peace, that all would unanimously embrace his gospel; no, but the effect of the preaching of his gospel would be division, for while some are gathered to it, others will be gathered against it; and this will put things into a ferment as here: but this is no more the fault of the gospel, than it is the fault of a wholesome medicine, that it stirs up the peccant humours in the body, in order to the discharge of them. Observe what the debate was:

1. Some were taken with him, and well affected to him. Many of the people, when they heard this saying, heard him with such compassion and kindness invite poor sinners to him, and with such authority engage to make them happy, they could not but think highly of him. (1.) Some of them said, *of a truth this is the prophet*, that prophet which Moses spake of to the fathers who should be like unto him; or, *this is the prophet*, who according to the received notions of the Jewish church, is to be the harbinger and forerunner of the Messiah: or, *this is truly a prophet*, one divinely inspired and sent of God. (2.) Others went further, and said, *this is the Christ*, *ver. 41. not the prophet of the Messiah, but the Messiah himself.* The Jews had at this time a more than ordinary expectation of the Messiah, which made them ready to say upon every occasion, *lo here is Christ*, or *lo he is there*; and this seems to be only the effect of some such confused and floating notions, which caught at the first appearance, for we do not find that these people became his disciples and followers; a good opinion of Christ is far short of a lively faith in Christ; many give Christ a good word, that give him no more. These here said, *this is the prophet, and this is the Christ*, but could not persuade themselves to leave all and follow him; and so this their testimony to Christ was but a testimony against themselves.

2. Others were prejudiced against him. No sooner was this great truth stated, that *Jesus is the Christ*, but immediately it was contradicted and argued against; and this one thing, that his rise and original was (as they took it for granted) out of Galilee, was thought enough to answer all the arguments for his being the Christ. For, *shall Christ come out of Galilee?* Has not the scripture said, that *Christ comes of the seed of David?*

See here, (1.) A laudable knowledge of the scripture. They were so far in the right, that the Messiah was to be a rod out of the stem of Jesse, Isa. xi. 1. That out of Bethlehem should arise the governor, Micah v. 2. This even the common people knew by the traditional explications which their scribes gave them. Perhaps these people, who had these scriptures so ready to object against Christ, were not alike knowing in other parts of holy writ, but had had these put into their mouths by their leaders, to fortify their prejudices against Christ. Many that espouse some corrupt notions, and spend their zeal in defence of them, seem to be very ready in the scriptures, when indeed they know little more than those scriptures which they have been taught to pervert.

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45. ¶ Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, *Why have ye not brought him?* 46. The officers answered, never man spake like this man. 47. Then answered them the Pharisees, *Are ye also deceived?* 48. Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him? 49. But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed. 50. Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) 51. Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth? 52. They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. 53. And every man went unto his own house.

The chief priests and Pharisees are here in a close cabal, contriving how to suppress Christ; though this was the great day of the feast, they attended not the religious services of the day, but left that to the vulgar, to whom it was common for those great ecclesiastics to consign and turn over the business of devotion; while they thought themselves better employed in the affairs of church policy. They sat in the council-chamber, expecting Christ to be brought a prisoner to them, they having issued out warrants for the apprehending of him, *ver. 32.* No where we are told,

First, What passed between them and their own officers, who returned without him, *re infecta.* Observe,

1. The reproof they gave the officers for not executing the warrant they gave them; *why have ye not brought him?* He appeared publicly, the people were many of them disgusted, and would have assisted them in taking him; this was the last day of the feast, and they would not have such another opportunity; why then did you neglect your duty? It vexed them that those who were their own creatures, who depended on them, and on whom they depended, into whose minds they have infused prejudices against Christ, should thus disappoint them. Note, Mischievous men fret that they cannot do the mischief they would, *Psal. cxii. 10. Neh. vi. 16.*

2. The reason which the officers gave for the non-execution of their warrant, *ver. 46. Never man spake like this man.* Now, 1. This was a very great truth, that never any man spake with that wisdom, and power, and grace, that convincing clearness, and that charming sweetness wherewith Christ spake; none of the prophets, no, not Moses himself. 2. The very officers that were sent to take him, were taken with him, and acknowledged this. Though it is likely they were men that had no quick sense of reason or eloquence, and it is certain had no inclination to think well of Jesus, yet so much self-evidence was there in what Christ said, that they could not but prefer him before all those that sat in Moses's seat. Thus Christ was preserved by the power God has upon the consciences, even of bad men. 3. They said this to their lords and masters, who could not endure to hear any thing that tended to the honour of Christ, and yet could not avoid hearing this: Providence ordered it so, that this should be said to them, that it might be a vexation in their sin, and an aggravation of their sin: Their own officers are witnesses against them, who could not be suspected to be biased in favour of Christ. This testimony of theirs should have made them reflect upon themselves with this thought, *Do we know what we are doing, when we are hating and persecuting one that speaks so admirably well?*

3. The Pharisees endeavour to secure their officers to their interest, and to beget in them prejudices against Christ, whom they saw them begin to be well affected to; to prevent which, they suggest two things:

1. That if they embrace the gospel of Christ they will deceive themselves, *ver. 47. Are ye also deceived?* Christianity has, from its first rise, been represented to the world as a great cheat upon it, and they that embraced it as men deceived, then when they began to be undeceived. They that looked for a Messiah in external pomp, thought them deceived who believed in a Messiah that appeared in poverty and disgrace; but the event declares, that none were ever more shamefully deceived, nor put a greater cheat upon themselves, than those who promised themselves worldly wealth and secular dominion with the Messiah. Observe what a compliment the Pharisees put upon these officers, *Are ye also deceived?* What! men of your sense, and thought, and figure; men that know better things than to be imposed upon by every pretender and upstart teacher: they endeavour to prejudice them against Christ, by persuading them to think well of themselves.

2. That they will disparage themselves. Most men, even in their religion, are willing to be governed by the example of those of the first rank: these officers therefore, whose preferments, such as they were, gave them a sense of honour, are desired to consider,

1. That if they become disciples of Christ, they go contrary to those who were persons of quality and reputation; *Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him?* You know they have not, and you ought to be bound up by their judgment, and to believe and do in religion according to the will of your superiors; will you be wiser than they? Some of the rulers did embrace Christ, *Matt. ix. 19. John iv. 53.* and more believed in him, but wanted courage to confess him, *John xii. 42.* but when the interest of Christ runs low in the world, it is common for its adversaries to represent it as lower than really it is. But it was too true, that few, very few, of them did. Note, 1. The cause of Christ hath seldom had rulers and Pharisees on its side. It needs not secular supports, nor proposes secular advantages, and therefore neither courts nor is courted by the great men of this world: *Self-denial* and the cross, are hard lessons to rulers and Pharisees. 2. This has confirmed many in their prejudices against Christ and his gospel, that the rulers and Pharisees have been no friends to them. Shall secular men pretend to be more concerned about spiritual things, than spiritual men themselves? Or to see further into religion than those who make it study their profession? If rulers and Pharisees do not believe in Christ, they that do believe in him will be the most singular, unfashionable, ungentle, people in the world, and quite out of the way of preferment: thus are people foolishly swayed by external motives in matters of eternal moment, are willing to be damned for fashion sake, and to go to hell in a compliment to the rulers and Pharisees.

2. That they will link themselves with the despicable, vulgar sort of people, *ver. 49. But this people who know not the law are cursed*; meaning especially, those that were well-affected to the doctrine of Christ. Observe,

1. How scornfully and disdainfully they call them; *this people.* It is not *these*, this lay-people, distinguished from them that were the clergy, but *these*, *rabble people*, this pitiful scandalous scoundrel people, whom they disdained to set with the dogs of their flock, though God had set them with the lambs of his. If they mean the commonalty of the Jewish nation, they were the seed of Abraham, and in covenant with God, and not to be spoken of with such contempt. The church's common interests are betrayed, when any one part of it studies to render the other mean and despicable. If they mean the followers of Christ, though they were generally persons of small figure and fortune, yet by owning Christ, they discovered such a sagacity, integrity, and interest in the favours of heaven, as made them truly great and considerable. Note, As the wisdom of God hath often chosen base things, and things which are despised, so the folly of men has commonly debased and despised those whom God has chosen.

2. How unjustly they reproach them as ignorant of the word of God; they know not the law; as if none knew the law but those that knew it from them: and no scripture knowledge were current, but what came out of their mint; and as if none knew the law but such as were observant of their canons and traditions. Perhaps many of those whom they thus despised knew the law, and the prophets too better than they did. Many a plain, honest, unlearned disciple of Christ, by meditation, experience, prayers, and especially obedience, attains to a more clear, sound, and useful knowledge of the word of God, than some great scholars with all their wit and learning. Thus David came to understand more than the ancients, and all his teachers, *Psal. cxix. 99, 100.* If the common people did not know the law, yet the chief priests and Pharisees of all men, should not have upbraided them with it; for whose fault was it but theirs who should have taught them better; but instead of that, took away the key of knowledge, *Luke xi. 52.*

3. How magisterially they pronounce sentence upon them; they are cursed; hateful to God, and all wise men *ἐκζητοῦντες*, an execrable people. It was well their saying they were cursed did not make them so, for the

curse.

curse causeless shall not come. It is an usurpation of God's prerogative, as well as great uncharitableness, to say of any particular persons, much more of any body of people, that they are reprobates: We are unable to try, and therefore unfit to condemn, and our rule is, *bless and curse not*. Some think they mean no more, but they are apt to be deceived and made fools of, but they use this odious word, they are *curst*, to express their own indignation, and to frighten their officers from having any thing to do with them; thus the language of hell in our profane age, calls every thing that is displeasing, *curst*, and *damm'd* and *confounded*. Now for aught appears, these officers had their convictions baffled and stifled by these suggestions, and they never enquire further after Christ; one word from a ruler or Pharisee will sway more with many, than the true reason of things, and the great interests of their souls.

Secondly, What passed between them and Nicodemus, a member of their own body, *ver. 50, &c.* Observe,

1. The just and rational objection which Nicodemus made against their proceedings. Even in their corrupt and wicked Sanhedrin, God left not himself quite without witness against their enmity: nor was the vote against Christ carried *nemine contradicente*. Observe,

1. Who it was that appeared against them; it was Nicodemus; *He that came to Jesus by night being one of them, ver. 50.* Observe, concerning him, 1. That though he had been with Jesus, and taken him for a teacher, yet he retained his place in the council, and his vote among them: Some impute this to his weakness and cowardice, and think it was his fault that he did not quit his place; but Christ had never said to him *follow me*: else he would have done as others, that left all to follow him; therefore it seems rather to have been his wisdom, not presently to throw up his place, because there he might have opportunity of serving Christ and his interest, and stemming the tide of the Jewish rage, which perhaps he did more than we are aware of. He might there be as Hushai among Absalom's counsellors, instrumental to turn their counsels into foolishness. Though we must in no case deny our Master, yet we may wait for an opportunity of confessing him to the best advantage. God has a remnant among all sorts; and many times finds, or puts, or makes, some good in the worst places and societies: There was Daniel in Nebuchadnezzar's court, and Nehemiah in Artaxerxes's. That though at first he came to Jesus by night for fear of being known, and still continued in his post; yet when there was occasion, he boldly appeared in defence of Christ, and opposed the whole counsel that were set against him. Thus many believers, who at first were timorous, and ready to flee at the shaking of a leaf, have at length by divine grace, grown courageous, and able to laugh at the shaking of a spear. Let none justify the disguising of their faith by the example of Nicodemus, unless like him they be ready upon the first occasion openly to appear in the cause of Christ, though they stand alone in it, for so Nicodemus did here, and John xix. 39.

2. What he alledged against their proceedings, *ver. 51. Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, (ἀκούσας αὐτοῦ, hear from himself) and know what he doth?* By no means, nor doth the law of any civilized nation allow it. Observe,

(1.) He prudently argues from the principles of their own law and an incontestible rule of justice, that no man is to be condemned unheard. Had he urged the excellency of Christ's doctrine, or the evidence of his miracles, or repeated to them his divine discourse with him, *chap. iii.* it had been but to cast pearls before swine, who would trample them under their feet, and would turn again and rent him; therefore he waves them.

(2.) Whereas they had reproached the people, especially the followers of Christ as ignorant of the law. He here tacitly retorts the charge upon themselves, and shews how ignorant they were of some of the first principles of the law, so unfit were they to give laws to others.

(3.) The law is here said to judge, and hear, and know, when magistrates that govern, and are governed by it, judge, and hear, and know, for they are the mouth of the law, and whatsoever they bind and loose according to the law, is justly said to be bound and loosed by the law.

(4.) It is highly fit that none should come under the sentence of the law, till they have first by a fair trial undergone the scrutiny of it. Judges, when they receive the complaints of the accuser, must always reserve in their minds room for the defence of the accused, for they have two ears, to mind them to hear both sides; this is said to be the manner of the Romans, *Acts xxv. 18.* The method of our law is *Oyer and Terminer*, first to hear and then to determine.

(5.) Persons are to be judged not by what is said of them, but by what they do: our law will not ask what men's opinions are of them or out-cries against them, but what have they done? What overt-acts can they be convicted of? Sentence must be given, *secundum allegata & probata*. Facts, and not faces, must be known in judgment; and the scale of justice must be used before the sword of justice.

Now we may suppose the motion Nicodemus made in the house upon this, was, That Jesus should be desired to come and give them an account of himself and his doctrine, and they should favour him with an impartial, unprejudiced hearing: but though none of them could gainsay his maxim, none of them would second his motion.

2. What was said to this objection. Here is no direct reply given to it, but when they could not resist the force of his argument, they fell foul upon him, and what was to seek in reason they made up in railing and reproach. Note, It is a sign of a bad cause, when men cannot bear to hear reason, and take it as an affront to be minded of its maxims: Whoever are against reason, give cause to suspect that reason is against them. See how they taunt him, *Art thou also of Galilee?* *ver. 52.* Some think he was well enough served for continuing among them, whom he knew to be enemies to Christ, and for his speaking no more on the behalf of Christ, than what he might have said on the behalf of the greatest criminal; that he should not be condemned unheard. Had he said, As for this Jesus, I have heard him myself, and know he is a teacher come from God, and you in opposing him fight against God, as he ought to have said, he could not have been worse abused than he was for this feeble effort of his tenderness for Christ.

As to what they said to Nicodemus; we may observe,

(1.) How false the grounds of their arguing are, for (1.) They suppose that Christ was of Galilee, and that was false, and if they would have been at the pains of an impartial inquiry, they might have found it so. (2.) They suppose that because most of his disciples were Galileans, they were all such, whereas he had abundance of disciples in Judea. (3.) They suppose that out of Galilee no prophet had risen, and for this appeal to Nicodemus's search; yet this was false too, Jonah was of Gath-heper, Nahum an Elkoshite, both of Galilee: Thus do they make lies their refuge.

(2.) How absurd their arguings were upon these grounds, such as were a shame to rulers and Pharisees. (1.) Is any man of worth and virtue ever the worse for the poverty and obscurity of his country? The Galileans were the seed of Abraham. Barbarians and Scythians are the seed of Adam, and have we not all one Father? (2.) Supposing no prophet had risen out of Galilee, yet it is not impossible that any should arise thence. If Elijah was the first prophet of Gilead, as perhaps he was; and if the Gileadites

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were called fugitives, must it therefore be questioned whether he were a prophet or no?

3. The hasty adjournment of the court hereupon, they broke up the assembly in confusion, and with precipitation, and every man went to his own house. They met to take counsel together against the Lord and his Anointed, but they imagined a vain thing; and not only he that sits in heaven laughed at them, but we may sit on earth and laugh at them too, to see all the politics of the close cabal broken to pieces with one plain honest word. They were not willing to hear Nicodemus, because they could not answer him. As soon as they perceived they had one such man among them, they saw it was to no purpose to go on with their design, and therefore they put off the debate to a more convenient season, when he was absent. Thus the counsel of the Lord is made to stand in spite of the devices in the hearts of men.

C H A P. VIII.

In this chapter we have, (1.) Christ's evading the snare which the Jews laid for him, in bringing to him a woman taken in adultery, *ver. 1—11.* (2.) Divers discourses or conferences of his with the Jews that cavilled at him, and sought occasion against him, and made every thing he said a matter of a controversy. (1.) Concerning his being the light of the world, *ver. 12—20.* (2.) Concerning the ruin of the unbelieving Jews, *ver. 21—30.* (3.) Concerning liberty and bondage, *ver. 31—37.* (4.) Concerning his Father and their Father, *ver. 38—47.* (5.) Here is his discourse in answer to their blasphemous reproaches, *ver. 48—50.* (6.) Concerning the immortality of believers, *ver. 51—59.* And in all this he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself.

1. JESUS went unto the mount of olives. 2. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. 3. And the Scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst. 4. They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. 5. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? 6. This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. 7. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. 8. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. 9. And they which heard it being convicted by their own consciences, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? 11. She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more.

Though Christ was basely abused in the foregoing chapter, both by the rulers and by the people, yet here we have him still at Jerusalem, still in the temple; how often would he have gathered them! Observe,

1. His retirement in the evening out of the town, *ver. 1. He went unto the mount of Olives*; whether to some friend's house, or to some booth pitched there, now at the feast of tabernacles, is not certain; whether he rested there, or as some think, continued all night in prayer to God, we are not told. But he went out of Jerusalem, perhaps because he had never a friend there that had either kindness or courage enough to give him a night's lodging, while his persecutors had houses of their own to go to, *chap. viii. 53.* he could not so much as borrow a place to lay his head on, but what he must go a mile or two out of town for. He retired (as some think) because he would not expose himself to the peril of a popular tumult in the night: It is prudent to go out of the way of danger, whenever we can do it without going out of the way of duty. In the day-time, when he had work to do in the temple he willingly exposed himself, and was under special protection, *Isa. xlix. 2.* But in the night, when he had not work to do, he withdrew into the country, and sheltered himself there.

2. His return in the morning to the temple, and his work there, *ver. 2.* Observe here,

(1.) What a diligent preacher Christ was; *Early in the morning he came again and taught.* Though he had been teaching the day before, he taught again to-day: Christ was a constant preacher, in season and out of season. Three things are taken notice of here concerning Christ's preaching, 1. The time; *early in the morning.* Though he lodged out of town, and perhaps had spent much of the night in secret prayer, yet he came early. When a day's work is to be done for God and souls, it is good to begin betimes, and take the day before us. 2. The place, in the temple; not so much because it was a consecrated place, for then he would have chosen it at other times, as because it was now a place of concourse. And he would hereby countenance solemn assemblies for religious worship, and encourage people to come up to the temple, for he had not yet left it desolate. 3. His posture, he sat down and taught, as one having authority; and as one that intended to abide by it for some time.

(2.) How diligently his preaching was attended upon. *All the people came unto him*; and perhaps many of them were the country people, who were this day to return home from the feast, and were desirous to hear one sermon more from the mouth of Christ before they returned. They came to him, though he came early. They that seek him early shall find him. Though the rulers were displeased at those that came to hear him, yet they would come; and he taught them, though they were angry at him too. Though there were few or none among them that were persons of any figure yet Christ bid them welcome, and taught them.

3. His dealing with those that brought to him the woman taken in adultery, tempting him. The Scribes and Pharisees would not only not hear Christ patiently themselves, but they disturbed him when the people were attending on him. Observe here,

its being secured to be paid) the Holy Ghost was not given. (2.) There was not so much need of the Spirit, while Christ was himself here upon earth, as there was when he was gone, to supply the want of him. (3.) The giving of the Holy Ghost was to be both an answer to Christ's intercession, John xiv. 16. and an act of his dominion, and therefore till he is glorified, and enters upon both these, the Holy Ghost is not given. (4.) The conversion of the Gentiles was the glorifying of Jesus. When certain Greeks began to enquire after Christ, he said, *now is the son of man glorified*, John xii. 23. Now the time for that was not yet come, when the gospel should be propagated in the nations, and therefore there was as yet no occasion for the gifts of tongue, that river of living water. But observe, though the Holy Ghost was not yet given; yet he was promised: it was now the great promise of the Father, Acts i. 4. Though the gifts of Christ's grace are long deferred yet they are well secured; and while we are waiting for the good promised we have the promise to live upon, which shall speak and shall not lie.

Secondly, The consequences of this discourse; what entertainment it met with; in general, it occasioned differences, ver. 43. *There was a division among the people because of him.* There was a schism, so the word is: there were diversities of opinions, and those managed with heat and contention: Various sentiments; and those such as set them at variance. Think we that Christ came to send peace, that all would unanimously embrace his gospel; no, but the effect of the preaching of his gospel would be division, for while some are gathered to it, others will be gathered against it; and this will put things into a ferment as here: but this is no more the fault of the gospel, than it is the fault of a wholesome medicine, that it stirs up the peccant humours in the body, in order to the discharge of them. Observe what the debate was.

1. Some were taken with him, and well affected to him. Many of the people, when they heard this saying, heard him with such compassion and kindness invite poor sinners to him, and with such authority engage to make them happy, they could not but think highly of him. (1.) Some of them said, *of a truth this is the prophet*, that prophet which Moses spake of to the fathers who should be like unto him; or, *this is the prophet*, who according to the received notions of the Jewish church, is to be the harbinger and forerunner of the Messiah: or, *this is truly a prophet*, one divinely inspired and sent of God. (2.) Others went further, and said, *this is the Christ*, ver. 41. not the prophet of the Messiah, but the Messiah himself. The Jews had at this time a more than ordinary expectation of the Messiah, which made them ready to say upon every occasion, *lo here is Christ*, or *lo he is there*; and this seems to be only the effect of some such confused and floating notions, which caught at the first appearance, for we do not find that these people became his disciples and followers; a good opinion of Christ is far short of a lively faith in Christ; many give Christ a good word, that give him no more. These here said, *this is the prophet*, and *this is the Christ*, but could not persuade themselves to leave all and follow him; and so this their testimony to Christ was but a testimony against themselves.

2. Others were prejudiced against him. No sooner was this great truth started, that *Jesus is the Christ*, but immediately it was contradicted and argued against; and this one thing, that his rise and original was (as they took it for granted) out of Galilee, was thought enough to answer all the arguments for his being the Christ. For, *shall Christ come out of Galilee?* Has not the scripture said, *that Christ comes of the seed of David?*

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First, What passed between them and their own officers, who returned without him, *re infecta*. Observe,

1. The reproof they gave the officers for not executing the warrant they gave them; *why have ye not brought him?* He appeared publicly, the people were many of them disgusted, and would have assisted them in taking him; this was the last day of the feast, and they would not have such another opportunity; why then did you neglect your duty? It vexed them that those who were their own creatures, who depended on them, and on whom they depended, into whose minds they have instilled prejudices against Christ, should thus disappoint them. Note, Mischievous men fret that they cannot do the mischief they would, *Psal. cxi. 10. Neh. vi. 10.*

2. The reason which the officers gave for the non-execution of their warrant, ver. 46. *Never man spake like this man.* Now, 1. This was a very great truth, that never any man spake with that wisdom, and power, and grace, that convincing clearness, and that charming sweetness wherewith Christ spake; none of the prophets, no, not Moses himself. 2. The very officers that were sent to take him, were taken with him, and acknowledged this. Though it is likely they were men that had no quick sense of reason or eloquence, and it is certain had no inclination to think well of Jesus, yet so much self-evidence was there in what Christ said, that they could not but prefer him before all those that sat in Moses's seat. Thus Christ was preferred by the power God has upon the consciences, even of bad men. 3. They said this to their lords and masters, who could not endure to hear any thing that tended to the honour of Christ, and yet could not avoid hearing this: Providence ordered it so, that this should be said to them, that it might be a vexation in their sin, and an aggravation of their sin: Their own officers are witnesses against them, who could not be suspected to be biased in favour of Christ. This testimony of theirs should have made them reflect upon themselves with this thought, Do we know what we are doing, when we are hating and persecuting one that speaks so admirably well?

3. The Pharisees endeavour to secure their officers to their interest, and to beget in them prejudices against Christ, whom they saw them begin to be well affected to; to prevent which, they suggest two things:

1. That if they embrace the gospel of Christ they will deceive themselves, ver. 47. *Are ye also deceived?* Christianity has, from its first rise, been represented to the world as a great cheat upon it, and they that embraced it as men deceived, then when they began to be undeceived. They that looked for a Messiah in external pomp, thought them deceived who believed in a Messiah that appeared in poverty and disgrace; but the event declares, that none were ever more shamefully deceived, nor put a greater cheat upon themselves, than those who promised themselves worldly wealth and secular dominion with the Messiah. Observe what a compliment the Pharisees put upon these officers, *Are ye also deceived?* What! men of your sense, and thought, and figure; men that know better things than to be imposed upon by every pretender and upstart teacher: they endeavour to prejudice them against Christ, by persuading them to think well of themselves.

2. That they will disparage themselves. Most men, even in their religion, are willing to be governed by the example of those of the first rank: these officers therefore, whose preferences, such as they were, gave them a sense of honour, are desired to consider,

1. That if they become disciples of Christ, they go contrary to those who were persons of quality and reputation: *Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him?* You know they have not, and you ought to be bound up by their judgment, and to believe and do in religion according to the will of your superiors; will you be wiser than they? Some of the rulers did embrace Christ, Matt. ix. 18. John iv. 53. and more believed in him, but wanted courage to confess him, John xii. 42. but when the interest of Christ runs low in the world, it is common for its adversaries to represent it as lower than really it is. But it was too true, that few, very few, of them did. Note, 1. The cause of Christ hath seldom had rulers and Pharisees on its side. It needs not secular supports, nor proposes secular advantages, and therefore neither courts nor is courted by the great men of this world: *Self-denial and the cross*, are hard lessons to rulers and Pharisees. 2. This has confirmed many in their prejudices against Christ and his gospel, that the rulers and Pharisees have been no friends to them. Shall secular men pretend to be more concerned about spiritual things, than spiritual men themselves? Or to see further into religion than those who make it study their profession? If rulers and Pharisees do not believe in Christ, they that do believe in him will be the most singular, unfashionable, ungentle, people in the world, and quite out of the way of preferment; thus are people foolishly swayed by external motives in matters of eternal moment, are willing to be damned for fashion sake, and to go to hell in a compliment to the rulers and Pharisees.

2. That they will link themselves with the despicable, vulgar sort of people, ver. 49. *But this people who know not the law are cursed*; meaning especially, those that were well-affected to the doctrine of Christ. Observe,

1. How scornfully and disdainfully they call them; *this people*. It is not *these*, this *lay-people*, distinguished from them that were the clergy, but *these*, *rabble people*, this pitiful scandalous scoundrel people, whom they disdained to set with the dogs of their flock, though God had set them with the lambs of his. If they mean the commonalty of the Jewish nation, they were the seed of Abraham, and in covenant with God, and not to be spoken of with such contempt. The church's common interests are betrayed, when any one part of it studies to render the other mean and despicable. If they mean the followers of Christ, though they were generally persons of small figure and fortune, yet by owning Christ, they discovered such a sagacity, integrity, and interest in the favours of heaven, as made them truly great and considerable. Note, As the wisdom of God hath often chosen base things, and things which are despised, so the folly of men has commonly debased and despised those whom God has chosen.

2. How unjustly they reproach them as ignorant of the word of God; *they know not the law*; as if none knew the law but those that knew it from them: and no scripture knowledge were current, but what came out of their mint: and as if none knew the law but such as were observant of their canons and traditions. Perhaps many of those whom they thus despised knew the law, and the prophets too better than they did. Many a plain, honest, unlearned disciple of Christ, by meditation, experience, prayers, and especially obedience, attains to a more clear, sound, and useful knowledge of the word of God, than some great scholars with all their wit and learning. Thus David came to understand more than the ancients, and all his teachers, *Psal. cxix. 99, 100.* If the common people did not know the law, yet the chief priests and Pharisees of all men, should not have upbraided them with it; for whose fault was it but their's who should have taught them better; but instead of that, took away the key of knowledge, Luke xi. 52.

3. How magisterially they pronounce sentence upon them; they are cursed; hateful to God, and all wise men *ἐκζητῶντες*, an *exceratle* people. It was well their saying they were cursed did not make them so, for the curse

curse causeless shall not come. It is an usurpation of God's prerogative, as well as great uncharitableness, to say of any particular persons, much more of any body of people, that they are reprobates: We are unable to try, and therefore unfit to condemn, and our rule is, *bless and curse not*. Some think they mean no more, but they are *apt to be deceived and made fools of*, but they use this odious word, they are *curse*, to express their own indignation, and to frighten their officers from having any thing to do with them; thus the language of hell in our profane age, calls every thing that is displeasing, *curse*, and *damned and confounded*. Now for aught appears, these officers had their convictions baffled and stifled by these suggestions, and they never enquire further after Christ; one word from a ruler or Pharisee will sway more with many, than the true reason of things, and the great interests of their souls.

Secondly, What passed between them and Nicodemus, a member of their own body, *ver. 50, &c.* Observe,

1. The just and rational objection which Nicodemus made against their proceedings. Even in their corrupt and wicked Sanhedrin, God left not himself quite without witness against their enmity: nor was the vote against Christ carried *nemine contradicente*. Observe,

1. Who it was that appeared against them; it was Nicodemus; *He that came to Jesus by night being one of them, ver. 50.* Observe, concerning him, 1. That though he had been with Jesus, and taken him for a teacher, yet he retained his place in the council, and his vote among them: Some impute this to his weakness and cowardice, and think it was his fault that he did not quit his place; but Christ had never said to him *follow me*: else he would have done as others, that left all to follow him; therefore it seems rather to have been his *wisdom*, not presently to throw up his place, because there he might have opportunity of serving Christ and his interest, and stemming the tide of the Jewish rage, which perhaps he did more than we are aware of. He might there be as Hushai among Absalom's counsellors, instrumental to turn their counsels into foolishness. Though we must in no case deny our Master, yet we may wait for an opportunity of confessing him to the best advantage. God has a remnant among all sorts; and many times finds, or puts, or makes, some good in the worst places and societies: There was Daniel in Nebuchadnezzar's court, and Nehemiah in Artaxerxes's. That though at first he came to Jesus *by night* for fear of being known, and still continued in his post; yet when there was occasion, he boldly appeared in defence of Christ, and opposed the whole counsel that were set against him. Thus many believers, who at first were timorous, and ready to flee at the shaking of a leaf, have at length by divine grace, grown courageous, and able to laugh at the shaking of a spear. Let none justify the disguising of their faith by the example of Nicodemus, unless like him they be ready upon the first occasion openly to appear in the cause of Christ, though they stand alone in it, for so Nicodemus did here, and John xix. 39.

2. What he alledged against their proceedings, *ver. 51. Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, (ἀκούσας αὐτοῦ, hear from himself) and know what he doth?* By no means, nor doth the law of any civilized nation allow it. Observe,

(1.) He prudently argues from the principles of their own law and an incontestible rule of justice, that no man is to be condemned *unheard*. Had he urged the excellency of Christ's doctrine, or the evidence of his miracles, or repeated to them his divine discourse with him, *chap. iii.* it had been but to cast pearls before swine, who would trample them under their feet, and would turn again and rent him; therefore he waves them.

(2.) Whereas they had reproached the people, especially the followers of Christ as ignorant of the law. He here tacitly retorts the charge upon themselves, and shews how ignorant they were of some of the first principles of the law, so unfit were they to give laws to others.

(3.) The law is here said to judge, and hear, and know, when magistrates that govern, and are governed by it, judge, and hear, and know, for they are the mouth of the law, and whatsoever they bind and loose according to the law, is justly said to be bound and loosed by the law.

(4.) It is highly fit that none should come under the sentence of the law, till they have first by a fair trial undergone the scrutiny of it. Judges, when they receive the complaints of the accuser, must always reserve in their minds room for the defence of the accused, for they have two ears, to mind them to hear both sides; this is said to be the manner of the Romans, *Acts xxv. 18.* The method of our law is *Oyer and Terminer*, first to hear and then to determine.

(5.) Persons are to be judged not by what is said of them, but by what they do: our law will not ask what men's opinions are of them or out-cries against them, but what have they done? What overt-acts can they be convicted of? Sentence must be given, *secundum allegata & probata*. Facts, and not faces, must be known in judgment; and the scale of justice must be used before the sword of justice.

Now we may suppose the motion Nicodemus made in the house upon this, was, That Jesus should be desired to come and give them an account of himself and his doctrine, and they should favour him with an impartial, unprejudiced hearing: but though none of them could gainsay his maxim, none of them would second his motion.

2. What was said to this objection. Here is no direct reply given to it, but when they could not resist the force of his argument, they fell foul upon him, and what was to seek in reason they made up in railing and reproach. Note, It is a sign of a bad cause, when men cannot bear to hear reason, and take it as an affront to be minded of its maxims: Whoever are against reason, give cause to suspect that reason is against them. See how they taunt him, *Art thou also of Galilee?* *ver. 52.* Some think he was well enough served for continuing among them, whom he knew to be enemies to Christ, and for his speaking no more on the behalf of Christ, than what he might have said on the behalf of the greatest criminal; that he should not be condemned unheard. Had he said, As for this Jesus, I have heard him myself, and know he is a teacher come from God, and you in opposing him fight against God, as he ought to have said, he could not have been worse abused than he was for this feeble effort of his tenderness for Christ.

As to what they said to Nicodemus, we may observe,

(1.) How false the grounds of their arguing are, for (1.) They suppose that Christ was of Galilee, and that was false, and if they would have been at the pains of an impartial inquiry, they might have found it so. (2.) They suppose that because most of his disciples were Galileans, they were all such, whereas he had abundance of disciples in Judea. (3.) They suppose that out of Galilee no prophet had risen, and for this appeal to Nicodemus's search; yet this was false too, Jonah was of Gath-heper, Nahum an Elkoshite, both of Galilee: Thus do they make lies their refuge.

(2.) How absurd their arguings were upon these grounds, such as were a shame to rulers and Pharisees. (1.) Is any man of worth and virtue ever the worse for the poverty and obscurity of his country? The Galileans were the seed of Abraham. Barbarians and Scythians are the seed of Adam, and have we not all one Father? (2.) Supposing no prophet had risen out of Galilee, yet it is not impossible that any should arise thence. If Elijah was the first prophet of Gilead, as perhaps he was; and if the Gileadites

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were called *fugitives*, must it therefore be questioned whether he were a prophet or no?

3. The hasty adjournment of the court hereupon, they broke up the assembly in confusion, and with precipitation, and every man went to his own house. They met to take counsel together against the Lord and his Anointed, but they imagined a vain thing; and not only he that sits in heaven laughed at them, but we may sit on earth and laugh at them too, to see all the politics of the close cabal broken to pieces with one plain honest word. They were not willing to hear Nicodemus, because they could not answer him. As soon as they perceived they had one such man among them, they saw it was to no purpose to go on with their design, and therefore they put off the debate to a more convenient season, when he was absent. Thus the counsel of the Lord is made to stand in spite of the devices in the hearts of men.

C H A P. VIII.

In this chapter we have, (1.) Christ's cradling the snare which the Jews laid for him, in bringing to him a woman taken in adultery, *ver. 1—11.* (2.) Divers discourses or conferences of his with the Jews that cavilled at him, and sought occasion against him, and made every thing he said a matter of a controversy. (1.) Concerning his being the light of the world, *ver. 12—20.* (2.) Concerning the ruin of the unbelieving Jews, *ver. 21—30.* (3.) Concerning liberty and bondage, *ver. 31—37.* (4.) Concerning his Father and their Father, *ver. 38—47.* (5.) Here is his discourse in answer to their blasphemous reproaches, *ver. 48—50.* (6.) Concerning the immortality of believers, *ver. 51—59.* And in all this he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself.

1. JESUS went unto the mount of olives. 2. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. 3. And the Scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst. 4. They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. 5. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? 6. This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. 7. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. 8. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. 9. And they which heard it being convicted by their own consciences, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? 11. She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more.

Though Christ was basely abused in the foregoing chapter, both by the rulers and by the people, yet here we have him still at Jerusalem, still in the temple; how often would he have gathered them! Observe,

1. His retirement in the evening out of the town, *ver. 1. He went unto the mount of Olives*; whether to some friend's house, or to some booth pitched there, now at the feast of tabernacles, is not certain; whether he rested there, or as some think, continued all night in prayer to God, we are not told. But he went out of Jerusalem, perhaps because he had never a friend there that had either kindness or courage enough to give him a night's lodging, while his persecutors had houses of their own to go to, *chap. vii. 53.* he could not so much as borrow a place to lay his head on, but what he must go a mile or two out of town for. He retired (as some think) because he would not expose himself to the peril of a popular tumult in the night: It is prudent to go out of the way of danger, whenever we can do it without going out of the way of duty. In the day-time, when he had work to do in the temple he willingly exposed himself, and was under special protection, *Isa. xlix. 2.* But in the night, when he had not work to do, he withdrew into the country, and sheltered himself there.

2. His return in the morning to the temple, and his work there, *ver. 2.* Observe here,

(1.) What a diligent preacher Christ was; *Early in the morning he came again and taught.* Though he had been teaching the day before, he taught again to-day: Christ was a constant preacher, in season and out of season. Three things are taken notice of here concerning Christ's preaching, 1. The time; *early in the morning.* Though he lodged out of town, and perhaps had spent much of the night in secret prayer, yet he came *early*. When a day's work is to be done for God and souls, it is good to begin betimes, and take the day before us. 2. The place, in the temple; not so much because it was a consecrated place, for then he would have chosen it at other times, as because it was now a place of concourse. And he would hereby countenance solemn assemblies for religious worship, and encourage people to come up to the temple, for he had not yet left it desolate. 3. His posture, he sat down and taught, as one having authority; and as one that intended to abide by it for some time.

(2.) How diligently his preaching was attended upon. *All the people came unto him*; and perhaps many of them were the country people, who were this day to return home from the feast, and were desirous to hear one sermon more from the mouth of Christ before they returned. They came to him, though he came *early*. They that seek him *early shall find him*. Though the rulers were displeased at those that came to hear him, yet they would come; and he taught them, though they were angry at him too. Though there were few or none among them that were persons of any figure yet Christ bid them welcome, and taught them.

3. His dealing with those that brought to him the woman taken in adultery, tempting him. The Scribes and Pharisees would not only not hear Christ patiently themselves, but they disturbed him when the people were attending on him. Observe here,

First, The case proposed to him by the Scribes and Pharisees, who herein contrived to pick a quarrel with him, and bring him into a snare, *ver. 3, 4, 5, 6.*

1. They set the prisoner to the bar, *ver. 3.* they brought him a woman taken in adultery: perhaps now lately taken, during the time of the feast of tabernacles, when it may be their dwelling in booths, and their feasting and joy might in wicked minds, which corrupt the best things, be made occasions of sin. Those that were taken in adultery, were by the Jewish law to be put to death, which the Roman powers allowed them the execution of, and therefore she was brought before the ecclesiastical court. Observe, she was taken in her adultery; though adultery is a work of darkness, which the criminals commonly take all the care they can to conceal, yet sometimes it is strangely brought to light. Those that promise themselves secrecy in sin, deceive themselves. The Scribes and Pharisees bring her to Christ, and set her in the midst of the assembly, as if they would leave her wholly to the judgment of Christ, he having sat down, as a judge upon the bench.

2. They prefer an indictment against her, *ver. 4.* Master this woman was taken in adultery. Here they call him Master, whom but the day before they had called a deceiver; in hopes with their flatteries to have ensnared him, as those, *Luke xx. 20.* But though men may be imposed upon with compliments, he that searcheth the heart cannot.

(1.) The crime for which the prisoner stands indicted, is no less than adultery; which even in the patriarchal age, before the law of Moses, was looked upon as an iniquity to be punished by the judges, *Job xxxi. 9—11.* Gen. xxxviii. 24. The Pharisees by their vigorous prosecution of this offender, seemed to have a great zeal against the sin, when it appeared afterwards that they themselves were not free from it; nay, they were within full of all uncleanness, *Matt. xxiii. 27, 28.* Note, It is common for those that are indulgent to their own sin, to be severe against the sins of others.

(2.) The proof of the crime was from the notorious evidence of the fact; an incontestible proof, she was taken in the act, so that there was no room to plead not guilty; had she not been taken in this act, she might have gone on to another: till her heart had been perfectly hardened, but sometimes it proves a mercy to sinners to have their sin brought to light, that they may do no more presumptuously. Better our sin should shame us than damn us; and be set in order before us for our conviction than for our condemnation.

3. They produce the statute in this case made and provided, and upon which she was indicted, *ver. 5.* Moses in the law commanded that such should be stoned. Moses commanded that they should be put to death, *Lev. xx. 10.* Deut. xxii. 22. but not that they should be stoned, unless the adulteress was espoused, not married, or was a priest's daughter, *Deut. xxii. 21.* Note, Adultery is an exceeding sinful sin, for it is the rebellion of a vile lust, not only against the command, but against the covenant of our God. It is the violation of a divine institution in innocency, by the indulgence of one of the basest lusts of man in his degeneracy.

4. They pray his judgment in the case. But what sayest thou? who pretendest to be a teacher come from God to repeal old laws, and enact new ones; what hast thou to say in this case? if they had asked this question in sincerity with a humble desire to know his mind, it had been very commendable. They that are intrusted with the administration of justice, should look up to Christ for direction; but this they said tempting him, that they might have to accuse him, *ver. 6.* (1.) If he should confirm the sentence of the law and let it take its course, they would censure him as inconsistent with himself, he having received publicans and harlots, and with the character of the Messiah, who should be meek and have salvation, and proclaim a year of release, and perhaps they would accuse him to the Roman governor, for countenancing the Jews in the exercise of a judicial power. But, (2.) If he should acquit her, and give his opinion that the sentence should not be executed, as they expected he would, they would represent him, 1. As an enemy to the law of Moses, and as one that usurped an authority to correct and control it, and would confirm that prejudice against him, which his enemies were so industrious to propagate, that he came to destroy the law and the prophets. 2. As a friend to sinners, and consequently a favourer of sin; if he should seem to connive at such wickedness, and let it go unpunished, they would represent him as countenancing it, and being a patron of offences, if he were a protector of offenders; than which no reflection could be more invidious upon one that professed the strictness, purity and business of a prophet.

Secondly, The method he took to resolve this case, and so to break this snare.

1. He seemed to slight it, and turned a deaf ear to it, he stooped down and wrote on the ground. It is impossible to tell and therefore needless to ask what he wrote; but it is the only mention made in the gospels of Christ's writings; Eusebius indeed speaks of his writings to Abgarus king of Edessa. Some think they have a liberty of conjecture that he wrote here. Grotius saith it was some grave weighty saying, and that it was usual for wise men, when they were very thoughtful concerning any thing, to do so. Jerom and Ambrose suppose he wrote, *Let the names of these wicked men be written in the dust.* Others this, *The earth accuseth the earth, but the judgment is mine.* Christ by this teacheth us to be slow to speak when difficult cases are proposed to us, not quickly to shoot our bolt; and when provocations are given us, or we are bantered, to pause and consider before we reply; think twice, before we speak once; *The heart of the wise studies to answer.* Our translation from some Greek copies which add, *μη προσωρισμῶς*, (though the most copies have it not) give this account of the reason of his writing on the ground, as though he heard them not. He did as it were look another way, to shew that he was not willing to take notice of their address, saying, in effect, *Who made me a judge or a divider?* It is safe in many cases to be deaf to that which it is not safe to answer, *Psal. xxxviii. 13.* Christ would not have his ministers to be entangled in secular affairs: let them rather employ themselves in any lawful studies, and fill up their time with writing on the ground which nobody will heed, than busy themselves in that which doth not belong to them. But when Christ seemed as though he heard them not, he made it appear that he not only heard their words but knew their thoughts.

2. When they importunately or rather impertinently pressed him for an answer, he turned the conviction of the prisoner upon the prosecutors, *ver. 7.*

1. They continued asking him, and his seeming not to take notice of them, made them the more vehement, for now they thought sure enough they had run him aground, and that he could not avoid the imputation of contradicting either the law of Moses, if he should acquit the prisoner, or his own doctrine of mercy and pardon if he should condemn her; and therefore they pushed on their appeal to him with vigour: whereas they should have construed his disregard of them, as a check to their design, and an intimation to them to desist, as they tendered their own reputation.

2. At last he put them all to shame and silence with one word, *He lifted up himself awaking as one out of sleep, Psal. lxxviii. 65. and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.*

1. Here Christ avoided the snare which they had laid for him, and effectually saved his own reputation. He neither reflected upon the law, nor

excused the prisoner's guilt; nor did he on the other hand encourage the prosecution, or countenance their heat; see the good effect of consideration. When we cannot make our point by steering a direct course, it is good to fetch a compass.

2. In the net which they spread is their own foot taken. They came with design to accuse him, but they were forced to accuse themselves. Christ owns it was fit the prisoner should be prosecuted, but appeals to their consciences whether they were fit to be the prosecutors.

1. He here refers to that rule, which the law of Moses prescribed in the execution of criminals, that the hand of the witnesses must be first upon them, *Deut. xvii. 7.* as in the stoning of Stephen, *Acts vii. 58.* The Scribes and Pharisees were the witnesses against this woman. Now Christ puts it to them, whether according to their own law they would dare to be the executioners. Durst they take away that life with their hands, which they were now taking away with their tongues; would not their own consciences fly in their faces, if they did?

2. He builds upon an uncontested maxim in morality, that it is very absurd for men to be zealous in punishing the offences of others, while they are every whit as guilty themselves, and they are not better than self-condemned who judge others, and yet themselves do the same thing. If there be any of you that are without sin, i. e. without sin of this nature, that has not some time or other been guilty of fornication or adultery, let him cast the first stone at her. Not that magistrates, who are conscious of guilt themselves should therefore connive at other's guilt. But therefore, 1. Whenever we find fault with others, we ought to reflect upon ourselves, and to be more severe against sin in ourselves than in others. 2. We ought to be favourable though not to the sins, yet to the persons of those that offend, and to restore them with a spirit of meekness, considering ourselves and our own corrupt nature. *Aut sumus, aut fuimus, vel possumus esse quod hic est.* Let this restrain us from throwing stones at our brethren, and proclaiming their fault; Let him that is without sin begin such discourse as that, and then those that are truly humbled for their own sins, will blush at it, and be glad to let it fall. 3. Those who are any way obliged to animadvert upon the faults of others are concerned to look well to themselves, and keep themselves pure: *Matt. vii. 5. Qui alterum incusat prohi, ipsum se intueri oportet.* The snuffers of the tabernacle were of pure gold.

3. Perhaps he refers to the trial of the suspected wife by the jealous husband with the waters of jealousy. The man was to bring her to the priest, *Numb. v. 15.* as the Scribes and Pharisees brought this woman to Christ. Now it was a received opinion among the Jews, and confirmed by experience, that if the husband who brought his wife to that trial, had himself been at any time guilty of adultery, *Aqua non explorant ejus uxorem:* The bitter water had no effect upon the wife; come then, saith Christ, according to your own tradition will I judge you, if you are without sin stand to the charge, and let the adulteress be executed: but if not, though she be guilty, while you that present her are equally so, according to your own rule she shall be free.

5. In this he attended to the great work which he came into the world about, and that was to bring sinners to repentance: not to destroy but to save. He aimed to bring, not only the prisoner to repentance, by shewing her his mercy, but the prosecutors too, by shewing them their sins; they thought to ensnare him, he sought to convince and convert them. Thus the blood thirsty hate the upright, but the just seek his soul.

3. Having given them this startling word, he left them to consider of it, and again stooped down and wrote on the ground, *ver. 8.* As when they made their address, he seemed to slight their question, so now he had given them an answer, he slighted their resentment of it; not caring what they said to it; nay they needed not to make any reply, the matter was lodged in their own breasts, let them make the best of it there. Or he would not seem to wait for an answer, lest they should on a sudden justify themselves, and then think themselves bound in honour to persist in it; but gives them time to pause and to commune with their own hearts. God saith *I hearkened and heard, Jer. viii. 6.* Some Greek copies here read, *He wrote on the ground, ὁ δὲ ἔγραψε ἐπὶ τῇ γῇ; ἀμαρτίας, the sins of every one of them;* this he could do, for he sets our iniquities before him; and this he will do, for he will set them in order before us too; he seals up our transgressions, *Job xiv. 16.* But he doth not write men's sins in the sand, no, they are written as with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond, *Jer. xvii. 1.* never to be forgotten till they are forgiven.

4. The Scribes and Pharisees were so strangely thunderstruck with the word of Christ, that they let fall the persecution of Christ whom they durst no further tempt; and their prosecution of the woman, whom they durst no longer accuse; *ver. 9.* They went out one by one. (1.) Perhaps his writing on the ground frightened them, as the hand-writing on the wall frightened Belshazzar. They concluded he was writing bitter things against them, writing their doom; Happy they who have no reason to be afraid of Christ's writing! (2.) However what he said frightened them, by sending them to their own consciences, he had shewed them to themselves and they were afraid if they should stay till he lifted up himself again his next word would shew them to the world, and shame them before men, and therefore they thought it best to withdraw. They went out one by one, that they might go out softly, and not by a noisy flight disturb Christ: they gat them away by stealth, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle, *2 Sam. xix. 3.* The order of their departure is taken notice of, beginning at the eldest, either because they were most guilty, or first aware of the danger they were in of being put to the blush; and if the eldest quit the field and retreat ingloriously, no marvel if the younger follow them. Now see here,

(1.) The force of the word of Christ for the conviction of sinners: *They which heard it were convicted by their own consciences.* Conscience is God's deputy in the soul, and one word from him will set it on work, *Heb. iv. 12.* Those that had been old in adulteries, and long fixed in a proud opinion of themselves, yet the eldest of them were here startled by the word of Christ, even Scribes and Pharisees, that were most conceited of themselves, yet by the power of Christ's word are made to speak.

(2.) The folly of sinners under these convictions, which appears in these Scribes and Pharisees. (1.) It is folly for those that are under convictions, to make it their principal care to avoid shame, as Judah, *Gen. xxxviii. 23.* lest we be ashamed. Our care should be more to save our souls, than to save our credit. Saul evidenced this hypocrisy, when he said, *I have sinned yet now honour me I pray thee.* There is no way to get the honour, and comfort of penitents, but by taking the shame of penitents. (2.) It is folly for those that are under convictions, to contrive how to shift off their convictions, and to get rid of them. The Scribes and Pharisees had the wound opened, and now they should have been desirous to have it searched, and then it might have been healed, but that was the thing they dreaded and declined. (3.) It is folly for those that are under convictions to get away from Jesus Christ, as these here did, for he is the only one that can heal the wounds of conscience, and speak peace to us. Those that are convicted by their consciences, will be condemned by their Judge, if they be not justified by their Redeemer; and will they then go from him? To whom will they go?

5. When

5. When the *self-conceited* prosecutors quitted the field, and fled for the same, the *self-condemning* prisoner stood her ground, with a resolution to abide by the judgment of our Lord Jesus. *Jesus was left alone* from the company of the Scribes and Pharisees, free from their molestations, and the woman standing in the midst of the assembly that were attending on Christ's preaching, where they set her, *ver. 3.* she did not seek to make her escape, though she had opportunity for it, but her prosecutors had appealed unto Jesus, and to him she would go, on him she would wait for her doom. Note, Those whose cause is brought before our Lord Jesus, will never have occasion to remove it into any other court, for he is the refuge of penitents. The law which accuses us, and calls for judgment against us, is by the gospel of Christ made to withdraw, its demands are answered, and its clamours silenced by the blood of Jesus: our cause is lodged in the gospel-court; we are *left with Jesus alone*, it is him only we have now to deal with, for to him all judgment is committed; let us therefore secure our interest in him, and we are made for ever. Let his gospel rule us, and it will infallibly save us.

6. Here is the conclusion of the trial, and the issue it was brought to, *ver. 10, 11.* *Jesus lifted up himself, and he saw none but the woman.* Though Christ may seem to take no notice of what is said and done, but leave it to the contending sons of men to deal it out among themselves, yet when the hour of his judgment is come, he will no longer keep silence. When David had appealed to God, he prayed, *lift up thyself*, Psalm vii. 6. and xciv. 2. The woman, it is likely, stood trembling at the bar, as one doubtful of the issue. Christ was *without sin*, and might cast the first stone; but though none more severe than he against sin, for he is infinitely just and holy, none more compassionate than he to sinners, for he is infinitely gracious and merciful, and his poor malefactors find him so, now she stands upon her deliverance.

Here is the method of the courts of judicature observed,

1. The prosecutors are called, *Where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?* Not but that Christ knew where they were, but he asked, that he might shame them who declined his judgment, and encourage her who resolved to abide by it. St. Paul's challenge is like this, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* Where are these their accusers? The accuser of the brethren shall be fairly cast out, and all indictments legally and regularly quashed.

2. They do not appear when the question was asked, *Hath no man condemned thee?* she said, *No man, Lord.* She speaks respectfully to Christ, calls him Lord, but is silent concerning her prosecutors, saith nothing in answer to that question which concerned them, *Where are those thine accusers?* doth not triumph in their retreat, or insult over them, as witnesses against themselves, not against her. If we hope to be forgiven by our judge, we must forgive our accusers: and if their accusations, how invidious soever, were the happy occasion of awakening our consciences, we may easily forgive them this wrong. But she answered the question which concerned herself, *Hath no man condemned thee?* True penitents find it enough to give account of themselves to God, and will not undertake to give an account of other people.

3. The prisoner is therefore discharged, *Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more.* Consider this,

1. As her discharge from the temporal punishment: if they do not condemn thee to be stoned to death, neither do I. Not that Christ came to disarm the magistrate of his sword of justice, or that it is his will that capital punishments should not be inflicted on malefactors; so far from that, the administration of public justice is established by the gospel, and made subservient to Christ's kingdom; *by me kings reign.* But Christ would not condemn this woman, (1.) Because it was none of his business, he was no judge or divider, and therefore would not intermeddle in secular affairs. His kingdom was not of this world. *Tractent fabrilis fabri.* (2.) Because she was prosecuted by those that were more guilty than she, and could not for shame insist upon their demand of justice against her. This law appointed the hands of the witnesses to be first upon the criminal, and afterwards the hands of all the people, so that if they fly off and will not condemn her, the prosecution drops. The justice of God in inflicting temporal judgments, sometimes take notice of a comparative righteousness, and spares those who are otherwise obnoxious, when the punishing of them would gratify those that are worse than they, *Deut. xxxii. 26.* But when Christ dismissed her, it was with this caution, *go and sin no more.* Impunity emboldens malefactors, and therefore those who are guilty, and yet have found means to escape the edge of the law, need to double their watch, lest Satan get advantage; for the fairer the escape was, the fairer the warning was to go and sin no more. They who help to save the life of a criminal, should, as Christ here, help to save the soul with this caution.

2. As her discharge from the eternal punishment. For Christ to say, I do not condemn thee, is in effect to say I do forgive thee; and the Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins, and could upon good grounds give this absolution, for as he knew the hardness and impenitent hearts of the prosecutors, and therefore said that which would confound them, so he knew the tenderness and sincere repentance of the prisoner, and therefore said that which would comfort her, as he did to that woman that was a sinner, such a sinner as this, who was likewise looked upon with disdain by a Pharisee, *Luke vii. 48.* *Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace.* So here, *Neither do I condemn thee.* Note, 1. They are truly happy whom Christ doth not condemn, for his discharge is a sufficient answer to all other challenges, they are all *coram non judice.* 2. Christ will not condemn those, who, though they have sinned, will *go and sin no more*, Psalm lxxxv. 3. *Isa. lv. 7.* He will not take the advantage he has against us for our former rebellions, if we will but lay down our arms and return to our allegiance.

4. Christ's favour to us in the remission of the sins that are past, should be a prevailing argument with us to *go and sin no more*, *Rom. vi. 1, 2.* Will not Christ condemn thee? Go then and sin no more.

12. ¶ Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world? he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. 13. The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. 14. Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true; for I know whence I came and whither I go: but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. 15. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. 16. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. 17. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. 18. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. 19. Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me,

nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. 20. These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; and no man laid hands on him: for his hour was not yet come.

The rest of the chapter is taken up with debates between Christ and contradicting sinners, who cavilled at the most gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. It is not certain whether these disputes were the same day that the adulteress was discharged, it is probable they were, for the evangelist mentions no other day, and takes notice, *ver. 2.* how early Christ began that day's work. Though those Pharisees that accused the woman were absconded, yet there were other Pharisees, *ver. 13.* to confront Christ, who had brass enough in their foreheads to keep them in countenance, though some of their party were put to such a shameful retreat: nay, perhaps that made them the more industrious to pick quarrels with him, if possible, to retrieve the reputation of their baffled party.

In these verses we have,

1. A great doctrine laid down, with the application of it.

(1.) The doctrine is, *That Christ is the light of the world*, *ver. 12.* Then spake Jesus again unto them; though he had spoken a great deal to them to little purpose, and what he had said was opposed, yet he spake again, for he speaketh once, yea twice: They had turned a deaf ear to what he said, and yet he spake again to them, saying, *I am the light of the world.* Note, Jesus Christ is the light of the world. One of the Rabbies saith, *Light* is the name of the Messiah, as it is written, *Dan. ii. 22.* *And light dwelleth with him.* God is light, and Christ is the image of the invisible God; God of gods, light of lights. He was expected to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, *Luke ii. 22.* and so of the light of the world, and not of the Jewish church only. The visible light of the world is the sun, and Christ is the sun of righteousness: one sun enlightens the whole world, so doth one Christ, and there needs no more. Christ's being the light speaks, (1.) What he is in himself, most excellent and glorious. (2.) What he is to the world, the fountain of light, enlightening every man. What a dungeon would the world be without the sun? So it would be without Christ, by whom light came into the world, *John iii. 19.*

(2.) The inference from this doctrine is, *He that followeth me as a traveller follows the light in a dark night shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* If Christ be the light then,

1. It is our duty to follow him, to submit ourselves to his conduct, and in every thing take directions from him, in the way that leads to happiness. Many follow false lights; there are *ignes fatui* that lead them to destruction, but Christ is the true light. It is not enough to look at this light, and to gaze upon it, but we must follow it, believe in it, and walk in it, for it is a light to our feet, not to our eyes only.

2. It is the happiness of those who follow Christ, that they shall not walk in darkness. They shall not be left destitute of those instructions in the way of truth, which are necessary to keep them from destroying error, and those directions in the way of duty, which are necessary to keep them from damning sin. They shall have the light of life, that knowledge and enjoyment of God, which will be to them the light of spiritual life in this world, and of everlasting life in the other world, where there will be no death nor darkness. Follow Christ, and we shall undoubtedly be happy in both worlds; Follow Christ, and we shall follow him to heaven.

2. The objection which the Pharisees made against this doctrine, and it was very trifling and frivolous, *ver. 13.* *Thou bearest record of thyself, thy record is not true.* In this objection they went upon the suspicion which we commonly have of men's self commendation, which is concluded to be the native language of self-love, such as we are all ready to condemn in others, but few are willing to own in themselves. But in this case the objection was very unjust, for (1.) They made that his crime, and a diminution to the credibility of his doctrine, which in the case of one who introduced a divine revelation was necessary and unavoidable. Did not Moses and all the prophets bear witness of themselves, when they avouched themselves to be God's messengers? Did not the Pharisees ask John Baptist, what sayest thou of thyself? (2.) They overlooked the testimony of all the other witnesses, which corroborated the testimony he bore of himself. Had he only borne record of himself, his testimony had indeed been suspicious, and the belief of it might have been suspended, but his doctrine was attested by more than two or three credible witnesses, enough to establish every word of it.

3. Christ's reply to this objection, *ver. 14.* He doth not retort upon them, as he might: you profess yourselves to be devout and good men, but your witness is not true, but plainly vindicates himself, and though he had waved his own testimony, *chap. v. 31.* yet here he abides by it, that it did not derogate from the credibility of his other proofs, but was necessary to shew the force of them. He is the light of the world, and it is the property of light to be self-evidencing: First principles prove themselves.

He urgeth three things to prove that his testimony, though of himself, was true and cogent.

1. That he was conscious to himself of his own authority, and abundantly satisfied in himself concerning it. He did not speak as one at uncertainty, nor propose a disputable notion which he himself hesitated about, but declared a decree, and gave such an account of himself as he would abide by; *I know whence I come, and whither I go.* He was fully apprised of his own undertaking from first to last; knew whose errand he went upon, and what his success would be; he knew what he was before his manifestation to the world, and what he should be after; that he came from his Father, and was going to him, *John xvi. 28.* came from glory, and was going to glory, *John xvii. 5.* This is the satisfaction of all good Christians, that though the world know them not, as it knew him not, yet they knew whence their spiritual life comes, and whither it tends, and go upon sure grounds.

2. That they were very incompetent judges of him, and of his doctrine, and not to be regarded.

(1.) Because they were ignorant willingly, and resolvedly ignorant; ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. To what purpose is it to talk with those who know nothing of the matter, nor desire to know. He had told them of his coming from heaven, and returning to heaven, but it was foolishness to them, they received it not, it was what the brutish man knows not, *Psalm xcii. 6.* They took upon them to judge of that which they did not understand, which lay quite out of the road of their acquaintance. They that despise Christ's dominions and dignities, speak evil of what they know not, *Jude 8—10.*

(2.) Because they were partial, *ver. 15.* *Ye judge after the flesh.* When fleshly wisdom gives the rule of judgment, and outward shews and appearances only are given in evidence, and the case decided according to them, then men judge after the flesh; and when the consideration of a secular interest turns the scale in judging of spiritual matters; when we judge in favour of that which pleases the carnal mind, and recommends us to a carnal world, we judge after the flesh: and the judgment cannot be right when the rule is wrong. The Jews judged of Christ and his gospel by outward appearances, and because he appeared so mean thought it im-

possible

possible he should be the light of the world; as if the sun under a cloud, were no sun.

(3.) Because they were *unjust* and *unfair* towards him, intimidated in that, *I judge no man*. I neither make nor meddle with your political affairs, nor doth my doctrine or practice at all intrench upon, or interfere with your civil rights or secular powers; he thus *judged no man*; now if he did not *war after the flesh*, it was very unreasonable for them to *judge him after the flesh*; and to treat him as an offender against the civil government. Or, *I judge no man*, i. e. not now at my first coming, that is deferred till I come again, John iii. 17. *Prima dispensatio Christi medicinalis est, non judicialis*. Aug.

3. That his testimony of himself was sufficiently supported and corroborated by the testimony of his Father *with him, and for him*, ver. 16. *And if I judge, my judgment is true*. He did in his doctrine judge, John ix. 39. though not *politically*. Consider him then,

1. As a judge, and his own judgment was valid. *If I judge*, I who have authority to execute judgments, I to whom all things are delivered, I who am the Son of God, and have the Spirit of God, if I judge, *my judgment is true*, of incontestible rectitude and uncontrollable authority, Rom. ii. 2. *If I should judge*, my judgment must be true, and then you would be condemned, but the judgment day is not yet come, you are not yet to be condemned, but spared, and therefore now *I judge no man*; so Chrysostom.

Now that which makes his judgment unexceptionable, is,

(1.) His Father's concurrence with him, *I am not alone, but I and the Father*. He had the Father's concurring counsels to direct; as he was with the Father before the world in forming the counsels, so the Father was with him in the world in prosecuting and executing those counsels, and never left him, *Inops consilii*, Isa. xi. 2. All the counsels of peace (and of war too) were between them both, Zech. vi. 13. He had also the Father's concurring power to authorise and confirm what he did: see *Psalm* lxxxix. 21, &c. Isa. xlii. 1. He did not act *separately*, but in his own name, and his Father's, and by the authority aforesaid, John v. 17. and xiv. 9, 10.

(2.) His Father's commission to him, it is the Father that sent me. Note, God will go along with them that he sends: see *Exod.* iii. 10—12. *Come, and I will send thee*, and certainly *I will be with thee*. Now if Christ had a commission from the Father, and the Father's presence with him in all his ministrations, no doubt his judgment was true and valid; no exception lay against it, no appeal lay from it.

2. Look upon him as a witness, and now he appeared no otherwise (having not as yet taken the throne of judgment) and as such his testimony was true and unexceptionable; this he shews, ver. 17, 18. where,

1. He quotes a maxim of the Jewish law, ver. 17. That the testimony of two men is true. Not as if it were always true in itself, for many a time hand was joined in hand to bear a false testimony, 1 Kings xxi. 10. But it is allowed, as sufficient evidence, upon which to ground a verdict, (*verum dictum*) and if nothing appear to the contrary, it is taken for granted to be true. Reference is here had to that law, *Deut.* xvii. 6. *At the mouth of two witnesses shall he that is worthy of death be put to death*. And see *Deut.* xix. 5. *Numb.* xxxv. 30. It is in favour of life that in capital causes two witnesses were required, as with us in case of treason. See *Heb.* vi. 18.

2. He applies this to the case in hand, ver. 18. *I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me bears witness of me*. Behold two witnesses! Though in human courts, where two witnesses are required, the criminal or candidate is not admitted to be a witness for himself; yet in a matter purely divine, which can be proved only by a divine testimony, and God himself must be the witness, if the formality of two or three witnesses be insisted on, there can be no other than the eternal Father, the eternal Son of the Father, and the eternal Spirit. Now if the testimony of two distinct persons, that are men, and therefore may deceive or be deceived, is conclusive, much more ought the testimony of the Son of God concerning himself, backed with the testimony of his Father concerning him, to command assent: see 1 John v. 7—9, 10, 11. Now this proves, not only that the Father and the Son are two distinct persons, for their respective testimonies are here spoken of as the testimonies of two several persons; but that these two are one, not only one in their testimony, but equal in power and glory, and therefore the same in substance. St. Austin here takes occasion to caution his hearers against Sabellianism on the one hand, which confounded the persons in the Godhead, and Arianism on the other, which denied the Godhead of the Son and Spirit. *Alius est filius, & alius pater, non tamen aliud, sed hoc ipsum est & pater, & filius, scilicet unus Deus est*, Tract. 36. in Joann.

Christ here speaks of himself and the Father as witnesses to the world, giving in evidence to the reason and conscience of the children of men, whom he deals with as men. And these witnesses to the world now, will in the great day be witnesses against those that perish in unbelief, and their word will judge men.

This was the sum of the first conference between Christ and these carnal Jews; in the conclusion of which, we are told how their tongues were let loose, and their hands tied. 1. How their tongues were let loose (such was the malice of hell) to cavil at his discourse, ver. 19. Though in what he said there appeared nothing of human policy or artifice, but a divine security, yet they set themselves to cross questions with him. None so incurably blind, as those that resolve they will not see.

Observe, (1.) How they evaded the conviction with a cavil: *Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father?* They might easily have understood by the tenor of this and other his discourses, that when he spoke of his Father, he meant no other but God himself, yet they pretend to understand him of a common person; and since he had appealed to his testimony, they bid him call his witness, and challenge him if he could, to produce him; *where is thy Father?* Thus, as Christ said of them, ver. 16. they *judge after the flesh*. Perhaps they hereby intend a reflection upon the meanness and obscurity of his family; *where is thy Father*, that he should be fit to give evidence in such a case as this. Thus they turn it off with a taunt, when they could not resist the wisdom and spirit with which he spake.

(2.) How he evaded the cavil with a further conviction; he did not tell them where his Father was, but charged them with wilful ignorance; *ye neither know me, nor my Father*. It is to no purpose to discourse to you about divine things, who talk of them as blind men do of colours. Poor creatures! ye know nothing of the matter.

1. He chargeth them with ignorance of God, *ye know not my Father*. In Judah was God known, *Psalm* lxxvi. 1. they had some knowledge of him as the God that made the world, but their eyes were darkened that they could not see the light of his glory shining in the face of Jesus Christ. The little children of the Christian church know the Father, know him as a Father, 1 John ii. 13. but these rulers of the Jews did not, because they would not so know him.

2. He shews them the true cause of their ignorance of God, *If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also*. The reason why men are ignorant of God, is because they are unacquainted with Jesus Christ. Did ye know Christ, 1. In knowing him we should know the Father, whose person he is the express image of, John xiv. 9. Chrysostom proves hence the Godhead of Christ, and his equality with the Father. We cannot say

he that knows a man knows an angel, or he that knows a creature knows the Creator, but he that knows Christ knows the Father. 2. By him we shall be instructed in the knowledge of God, and introduced into an acquaintance with him. If we know Christ better, we shall know the Father better, but where the Christian religion is slighted and opposed, natural religion will soon be lost and laid aside: Deism makes way for atheism. Those become vain in their imaginations concerning God, that will not learn of Christ.

2. See how their hands were tied, though their tongues were thus let loose; such was the power of heaven to restrain the malice of hell. These words spake Jesus, these bold words, these words of conviction and reproof, in the treasury, an apartment of the temple, where to be sure the chief priests, whose gain was their godliness, were mostly resident, attending the business of the revenue. Christ taught in the temple, sometimes in one part, sometimes in another, as he saw occasion. Now the priests who had so great a stock in the temple, and looked upon it as their *demesne*, might easily with the assistance of their janizaries that were it their beck, either have seized him, and exposed him to the rage of the mob, and that punishment which they called the beating of the rebels; or at least have silenced him, and stopped his mouth there, as Amos, though tolerated in the land of Judah, was forbidden to prophesy in the king's chapel, *Amos* vii. 12, 13. Yet even in the temple, where they had him in their reach, *No man laid hands on him, for his hour was not yet come*. See here, (1.) The restraint laid upon his persecutors by an invisible power, none of them durst meddle with him. God can set bounds to the wrath of men, as he doth to the waves of the sea; let us not therefore fear danger in the way of duty. For God hath Satan and all his instruments in a chain. (2.) The reason of this restraint, *His hour was not yet come*. The frequent mention of this intimates, how much the time of our departure out of the world depends upon the fixed counsel and decree of God. It will come, it is coming; not yet come, but it is at hand: Our enemies cannot hasten it any sooner, nor our friends delay it any longer than the time appointed of the Father, which is very comfortable to every good man, who can look up and say with pleasure, *My times are in thy hands*; and better there than in our own. His hour was not yet come, because his work was not done, nor his testimony finished. To all God's purposes there is a time.

21. ¶ Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. 22. Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. 23. And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. 24. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. 25. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. 26. I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. 27. They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. 28. Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. 29. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. 30. And he spake these words, many believed on him.

Christ here gives fair warning to the careless unbelieving Jews, to consider what would be the consequence of their infidelity, that they might prevent it before it was too late; for he spake words of terror as well as words of grace. Observe here,

First, The wrath threatened, ver. 21. *Jesus said again unto them that which might be likely to do them good*. He continued to teach in kindness to those few who received his doctrine, though there were many that resisted it, which is an example to ministers to go on with their work notwithstanding opposition, because a remnant shall be saved. Here Christ changes his voice; he had piped to them in the offers of his grace, and they had not danced; now he mourns to them in the denunciations of his wrath, try if they would lament. He said, *I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: Whither I go ye cannot come*. Every word is terrible, and speaks spiritual judgments, which are the sorest of all others; worse than war, pestilence, and captivity, which the Old Testament prophets denounced.

Four things are here threatened against the Jews.

1. Christ's departure from them. *I go my way*, i. e. it shall not be long but I will go, you need not take so much pains to drive me from you, I shall go of myself. They said to him, *depart from us*, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways, and he takes them at their word; but woe to those from whom Christ departs. Ichabod, the glory is gone, our defence is departed when Christ goes. Christ frequently warned them of his departure before he left them: he bid often farewell, as one loth to depart, and willing to be invited, and that would have them stir up themselves to take hold on him.

2. Their enmity to the true Messiah, and their fruitless and infatuated enquiries after another Messiah, when he was gone away, which were both their sins and their punishments. *Ye shall seek me*, which speaks either, (1.) Their enmity to the true Christ. Ye shall seek to ruin my interest, by persecuting my doctrine and followers with a fruitless design to root them out. This was a continual vexation and torment to themselves, made them incurably ill-natured, and brought wrath upon them (God's and our own) to the uttermost. Or, (2.) Their enquiries after false Christs. Ye shall continue your expectations of the Messiah, and be the self-perplexing seekers of a Christ to come when he is already come; like the Sodomites, who being struck with blindness wearied themselves to find the door, *Rom.* ix. 31, 32.

3. Their final impenitency: *Ye shall die in your sins*. Here is an error in all our English bibles, even the old bishops translation, and that of Geneva, (the Rhemists only excepted) for all the Greek copies have it in the singular number, *ἵνα ἕκαστος ἑαυτοῦ*. In your sin, so all the Latin versions: and Calvin has a note upon the difference between this and ver. 24. where it is plural, *ἵνα ἅπαντες*, that here it is meant especially of the sin of unbelief, *in hoc peccato vestro*, in this sin of yours. Note, Those that live in unbelief are

for ever undone, if they die in unbelief. Or it may be understood in general, *Ye shall die in your iniquity*, as *Ezek. iii. 19.* and *xxxiii. 9.* Many that have long lived in sin, yet by a timely repentance through grace are saved from *dying in sin*, but for those who go out of this world of probation into that of retribution under the guilt of sin *unpardoned*, and the power of sin *unbroken*, there remaineth no relief; salvation itself cannot save them, *Job xx. 11. Ezek. xxxii. 27.*

4. Their eternal separation from Christ, and all happiness in him: *Whither I go ye cannot come.* When Christ left the world he went to a state of perfect happiness, he went to paradise, thither he took the penitent thief with him that did not die in his sins; but the impenitent not only *shall not* come to him, but they *cannot*, it is morally impossible, for heaven would not be heaven to those that die unsanctified, and *unmeet* for it. *Ye cannot come*, because ye have *no right* to enter into that Jerusalem, *Rev. xxi. 14. Whither I go, ye cannot come* to fetch me hence, so Dr. Whitby: and the same is the comfort of all good christians, that when they are got to heaven they will be out of the reach of their enemies' malice.

Secondly, *The jest they made of this threatening.* Instead of trembling at this word, they bantered it, and turned it into ridicule; *ver. 22. Will he kill himself?* See here, 1. What slight thoughts they had of Christ's threatenings, they could make themselves and one another merry with them, as those that mocked the messengers of the Lord, and turned the *burden of the word of the Lord* into a *by-word*, and *precept upon precept, line upon line* into a merry song, *Isa. xxviii. 13.* But *be ye not mockers lest your bands be made strong.* 2. What ill thoughts they had of Christ's meaning, as if he had an inhuman design upon his own life to avoid the indignities done him, like Saul. This is indeed (say they) to go whither we cannot follow him, for we will never *kill ourselves.* Thus they make him not only such a one as themselves, but worse; yet in the calamities brought by the Romans upon the Jews, many of them in discontent and despair did *kill themselves.* They had put a much more favourable construction upon this word of his, *chap. vii. 34, 35. Will he go to the dispersed Gentiles?* But see how indulged malice grows more and more malicious.

Thirdly, *The confirmation of what he had said.*

He had said, *whither I go ye cannot come*, and here he gives reasons for that, *ver. 23. Ye are from beneath, I am from above: Ye are of this world, I am not of this world.* Ye are *ἐκ τῶν κάτω*, of those things which are beneath; noting not so much their rise from beneath as their affections to these lower things; ye are *ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ*, in those things, as those that belong to them; how can you come where I go, when your spirit and disposition is so directly contrary to mine? See here, (1.) What the *Spirit of the Lord Jesus* was, not of *this world*, but from *above.* He was perfectly dead to the wealth of the world, the ease of the body, or the praise of men, and was wholly taken up with divine and heavenly things; and none shall be with him but those who are *born from above*, and have their *conversation in heaven.* (2.) How contrary to *this* their spirit was; ye are *from beneath*, and of *this world.* The Pharisees were of a carnal worldly spirit; and what communion could Christ have with them?

2. He had said, *ye shall die in your sins*, and here he stands to it; therefore I said ye shall die in your sins, because *ye are from beneath*; and he gives this further reason for it *if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*, *ver. 24.* See here, 1. What we are required to believe, *that I am he*, *ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*. That *I am*, which is one of God's names, *Exod. iii. 14.* It was the Son of God that there said, *Ehejeh asher Ehejeh, I will be what I will be*; for the deliverance of Israel was but a figure of good things to come, but now he saith, *I am he*, he that should come, he that you expect the Messiah to be, that you would have me to be to you: I am more than the bare name of the Messiah: I do not only call myself so, but *I am he.* True faith doth not *amuse* the soul with an empty sound of words but affects it with the doctrine of Christ's mediation as a real thing, that has real effects. 2. How necessary it is that we believe this, if we have not this faith, *we shall die in our sins*: for the matter is so settled, that without this faith, 1. We cannot be saved from the power of sin while we live, and therefore shall certainly continue in them to the last. Nothing but the *doctrine* of Christ's grace will be an *argument* powerful enough, and none but the *spirit of Christ's grace* will be an *agent* powerful enough to turn us from sin to God, and that Spirit is given, and that doctrine given to be effectual to those only who believe in Christ: so that if Satan be not by faith dispossessed, he has a lease of the soul for its life; if Christ do not cure us our case is desperate, and we shall *die in our sins.* 2. Without faith we cannot be saved from the punishment of sin when we die, for the *wrath of God remains* upon them that believe not, *Mark xvi. 16.* Unbelief is the damning sin, it is a sin against the remedy. Now this implies the great gospel promise, *if we believe that Christ is he*, and receive him accordingly, *we shall not die in our sins.* The law saith absolutely to all, as Christ said, *ver. 21. Ye shall die in your sins*, for we are all guilty before God; but the gospel is a defeasance of the obligation upon condition of believing; the curse of the law is vacated and annulled to all that submit to the grace of the gospel; believers die in Christ, in his love, in his arms, and so are saved from *dying in their sins.*

Fourthly, Here is a farther discourse concerning *himself*, occasioned by his requiring faith in himself as the condition of salvation, *ver. 25—29.* Observe,

1. The question which the Jews put to him, *ver. 25. Who art thou?* This they asked tauntingly, and not with any desire to be instructed. He had said, ye must believe, that *I am he.* By his not saying expressly who he was, he plainly intimated, that in *his person* he was such a one as could not be described by any, and in *his office* such a one as was expected by all that looked for redemption in Israel; yet this awful manner of speaking, which had so much significance in it, they turned to his reproach, as if he knew not what to say of himself. *Who art thou?* That we must with an implicit faith believe in thee, that thou art some mighty HE; we know not *who*, or *what*, nor are worthy to know.

2. His answer to this question, wherein he directs them three ways for information.

1. He refers himself to *what he had said* all along. Do you ask who I am, even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. The original here is a little intricate, *τὸ αὐτὸ ὅτι ἐκ τῆς ἀρχῆς εἶπα ὑμῖν*, which some read thus: *I am the beginning, which also I speak unto you.* So Austin takes it Christ is called *Ἀρχή*, the beginning, *Col. i. 18. Rev. i. 8.—xxi. 6.—iii. 14.* and so it agrees with *ver. 24, I am he*, compare *Isa. xli. 4. I am the first, I am he.* Those who object that it is the accusative case, and therefore not properly answering to *τίς εἶ;* must undertake to construe by grammar rules that parallel expression, *Rev. i. 8. ἐγώ εἰμι.* But most interpreters agree with our version, do you ask *who I am?*

(1.) I am the same that I said to you from the beginning of time in the scriptures of the Old Testament, the same that from the beginning was said to be *the seed of the woman that should bruise the serpent's head.* The same that in all the ages of the church was the mediator of the covenant, and the faith of the patriarchs.

(2.) From the beginning of my public ministry. The account he had al-

ready given of himself, he resolved to *abide by*, he had declared himself to be the *Son of God*, *chap. v. 16.* to be the Christ, *chap. ix. 20.* and the bread of life, and had proposed himself as the object of that faith which is necessary to salvation, and to this he refers himself for an answer to their question, *Christ is one with himself*, what he had said from the beginning, he saith still. He is an *everlasting gospel.*

2. He refers himself to his Father's judgment, and the instruction he had from him, *ver. 26. I have many things, more than you think of, to say, and in them to judge of you.* But (why should I trouble myself any farther with you?) I know very well *he that sent me is true*, and will stand by me, and bear me out, for *I speak to the world*, to which I am sent as an ambassador, *those things, all those, and those only, which I have heard of him.* Here,

(1.) He suppresseth his accusations of them. He had many things to charge them with and many evidences to produce against them, but for the present he had said enough. Note, Whatever discoveries of sin are made to us, he that searcheth the heart hath still *more to judge of us*, *1 John iii. 20.* How much soever God reckons with sinners in this world, there is still a *farther reckoning* yet behind, *Deut. xxxii. 34.* Let us learn hence not to be forward to say all we can say, even against the worst of men; we may have many things to say by way of censure, which yet it is better to leave *unsaid*, for what is it to us?

(2.) He enters his appeal against them to his Father; *He that sent me.* Here two things comfort him.

(1.) That he had been *true to his Father*, and to the trust reposed in him: *I speak to the world*, for his gospel was to be preached to every creature, *those things which I have heard of him.* Being given for a witness to the people, *Isa. lv. 4.* He was *amen*, a faithful witness, *Rev. iii. 14.* He did not conceal his doctrine, but spoke it to the world, being of common concern, it was to be of common notice; nor did he change or alter it, nor vary from the instructions he received from him that sent him.

(2.) That his Father would be *true to him*, true to the promise that he would make his mouth like a sharp sword, true to his purpose concerning him, which was a *decree*, *Psal. ii. 7.* true to the threatenings of his wrath against those that should reject him. Though he should not *accuse them* to his Father, yet the Father that sent him would undoubtedly reckon with them, and would be true to what he had said, *Deut. xviii. 19.* that whosoever would not hearken to that prophet whom God would raise up, *he would require it of him.* Christ would not accuse him, for, saith he, he that sent me is true, and will pass judgment on them, though I should not demand judgment against them. Thus when he lets fall the present prosecution, he binds them over to the judgment day, when it will be too late to dispute, what they will not now be persuaded to believe. *I as a deaf man heard not, for thou wilt hear*, *Psal. xxxviii. 14, 15.*

Upon this part of our Saviour's discourse, the evangelist has a melancholy remark, *ver. 27. They understood not that he spoke to them of the Father.* See here, (1.) The power of Satan to blind the minds of them which believe not; though Christ spoke so plainly of God as his Father in heaven, yet they did not understand who he meant, but thought he spoke of some Father he had in Galilee. Thus the plainest things are riddles and parables to those who are resolved to hold fast their prejudices; day and night are alike to the blind. (2.) The reason why the threatenings of the word make so little impression upon the minds of sinners, it is because they understand not whose the wrath is that is revealed in them; when Christ told them of the truth of him that sent him, as a warning for them to prepare for his judgment, which is *according to truth*; they slighted the warning, because they understood not whose judgment it was that they made themselves obnoxious to.

3. He refers himself to *their own convictions* hereafter, *ver. 28, 29.* He finds they will not understand him, and therefore adjourns the trial till further evidence should come; they that *will not see*, yet *shall see*, *Isa. xxvi. 11.* Now observe here,

What they should ere long be convinced of: *ye shall know that I am he*, that Jesus is the true Messiah. Whether you will own it or no before men, you shall be made to know it in your own consciences, the convictions of which though you may *stifle*, yet you cannot *baffle.* That *I am he*, not which you represent me to be, but he that I preach myself to be, he that should come! Two things they should be convinced of, in order to this. (1.) That he did nothing of himself, not of himself as man, of himself alone, of himself without the Father, with whom he was *one.* He doth not hereby derogate from his own inherent power, but only denies their charge against him as a *false prophet*, of whom it is said, that they prophesied out of their own hearts, and followed their own spirits. (2.) That as his father taught him, so to speak these things, that he was not *ἐκ τῶν κάτω*, but *ἐκ τῶν ἄνω*. The doctrine he preached was the counterpart of the counsels of God, which he was intimately acquainted with, *καθὼς ἐκείνους τὰς ψυχὰς ἠγάπα.* I speak those things not only which he taught me, but as he taught me, with the same divine power and authority.

2. When they should be convinced of this. *When ye have lifted up the Son of man*, lifted him up upon the cross, as the brazen serpent upon the pole, *John iii. 14.* as the sacrifices under the law (for Christ is the great sacrifice) which when they were offered, were said to be *elevated* or *lifted up*; hence the burnt offerings, the most ancient and honourable of all; were called *elevations* (*Gnoloth*, from *Gnolah ascendit*;) and in many other offerings they used the significant ceremony of *heaving* the sacrifice up, and *moving* it before the Lord; thus was Christ *lifted up.* Or it notes, that his death was his exaltation; they that put him to death, thought thereby for ever to have *sunk* him and his interest, but it proved to be the advancement of both, *John xii. 24.* When the Son of man was crucified, the Son of man was glorified. Christ had called his dying his *going away*, here his being lifted up; thus the death of the saints, as it is their departure out of this world so it is their advancement to a better. Observe, he speaks of these he is now talking with, as the instruments of his death; when ye have lifted up the Son of man, not that they were to be the priests to offer him up, no, that was his own act, he offered up himself, but they would be his betrayers and murderers; see *Acts ii. 23.* they lifted him up to the cross, but then he lifted up himself to his Father. Observe, with what tenderness and mildness Christ here speaks to those who he certainly knew would put him to death, to teach us not to hate or seek the hurt of any, though we may have reason to think they hate us, and seek our hurt.

Now Christ speaks of his death, as that which would be a powerful conviction of the infidelity of the Jews; *when ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know this.* And why then? (1.) Because careless and unthinking people are often taught the worth of mercies by the want of them, *Luke xvii. 22.* (2.) The guilt of their sin in putting Christ to death, would so awaken their consciences, that they would be put upon serious enquiries after a Saviour, and then would know that Jesus was he who alone could save them. And so it proved, when being told, that with wicked hands they had crucified and slain the Son of God, they cried out, *What shall we do?* and were made to know assuredly, that this Jesus was Lord and Christ, *Acts ii. 37.* (3.) There would be such signs and wonders attending his death, and the lifting him up from death in his resurrection, as would give a stronger

stronger proof of his being the Messiah, than any that had been yet given: and multitudes were hereby brought to believe that Jesus is the Christ, who had before contradicted and opposed him. (4.) By the death of Christ, the pouring out of the Spirit was purchased, who would convince the world that *Jesus is he*, John xvi. 7, 8. (5.) The judgments which the Jews brought upon themselves, by putting Christ to death, which filled up the measure of their iniquity, were a sensible conviction to the most hardened among them that *Jesus was he*? Christ had often foretold that desolation, as the just punishment of their invincible unbelief; and *when it came to pass; (to it did come,)* they could not but know that the *great prophet had been among them*, Ezek. xxxiii. 33.

3. What supported our Lord Jesus in the mean time, *ver. 29. He that sent me is with me*, in my whole undertaking, for the Father (the fountain and first spring of this affair, from whom, as its great cause and author, it is derived) *hath not left me alone* to manage it myself, nor deserted the business or me, in the prosecution of it, for *I do always those things that please him*.

Here is, 1. The assurance which Christ had of his Father's presence with him, which includes both a divine power going along with him to enable him for his work, and a divine favour manifested to him to encourage him in it. *He that sent me is with me*, Isa. xliii. 1. Psalm lxxxix. 21. This greatly emboldens our faith in Christ and our reliance upon his word, that he had, and knew he had his Father with him, to confirm the word of his servant, Isa. xlii. 26. The King of kings accompanied his own ambassador to attest his mission, and assist his management, and never left him alone, either solitary or weak; it also aggravated the wickedness of those that opposed him, and was an intimation to them of the *premure* they run themselves into by resisting him, for thereby they were *sound fighters against God*. How easily soever they might think to crush him and run him down, let them know he had one to back him with whom it is the greatest madness that can be to contend.

2. The ground of this assurance; for *I do always those things that please him*. That is, (1.) That great affair which our Lord Jesus was continually engaged in, was an affair which the Father *that sent him* was highly well pleased with. His whole undertaking is called the *pleasure of the Lord*, Isa. liii. 10, because of the *counsels* of the eternal mind about it, and the *complacency* of the eternal mind in it. (2.) His management of that affair was in nothing displeasing to his Father; in executing his commission, he punctually observed all his instructions, and did in nothing vary from them; no mere man since the fall could say such a word as this, for *in many things we offend all* but our Lord Jesus never offended his Father in any thing, but as became him he fulfilled all righteousness; and this was necessary to the validity and value of the sacrifice he was to offer up; for if he had in any thing displeased the Father himself, and so had had any sin of his own to answer for, the Father could not have been pleased with him as a propitiation for our sins, but such a priest and such a sacrifice became us as was perfectly pure and spotless. We may likewise learn hence, that God's servants may then expect God's presence with them when they choose, and do those things that please him, Isa. lvi. 45.

Fifthly, Here is the good effect which this discourse of Christ's had upon some of his hearers, *ver. 30. As he spake these words, many believed on him*. Note, 1. Though multitudes perish in their unbelief, yet there is a remnant according to the election of grace, who believe to the saving of the soul. If Israel, the whole body of the people be not gathered, yet there are those of them, in whom Christ will be glorious, Isa. xlix. 5. This the apostle insists upon to reconcile the Jews rejection with the promises made unto their fathers. There is a remnant, Rom. xi. 5. 2. The words of Christ, and particularly his threatening words, are made effectual by the grace of God, to bring in poor souls to believe in him. When Christ told them, that if they believed not, they should die in their sins, and never get to heaven, they thought it was time to look about them, Rom. i. 16—18. 3. Sometimes there is a wide door opened, and an effectual one, even there where there are many adversaries. Christ will carry on his work, though the heathen rage. The gospel gains great victories, sometimes there where it meets with great opposition. Let this encourage God's ministers to preach the gospel, though it be with much contention, for they shall not labour in vain. Many may be secretly brought home to God by those endeavours, which are openly contradicted and cavilled at by men of corrupt minds. Austin has an affectionate ejaculation in his lecture upon these words. *Utinam et me loquenti multi credant, non in me, sed mecum in eo!*

31. ¶ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. 33. ¶ They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? 34. Jesus answered them, verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. 35. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. 36. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. 37. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me because my word hath no place in you.

We have in these verses,

First, A comfortable doctrine laid down concerning the *spiritual liberty* of Christ's disciples, intended for the encouragement of those Jews which believed. Christ knowing that his doctrine began to work upon some of his hearers, and perceiving that virtue had gone out of him, turned his discourse from the proud Pharisees, and addressed himself to those weak believers; then when he had denounced wrath against those that were hardened in unbelief; then he spoke comfort to those few feeble Jews which believed in him. See here, 1. How graciously the Lord Jesus looks to those that tremble at his word; and are ready to receive it; he has something to say to those who have hearing ears, and will not pass by those who set themselves in his way, without speaking to them. 2. How carefully he cherisheth the beginnings of grace, and meets those that are coming towards him. These Jews that believed, were yet but weak: but Christ did not therefore cast them off, for he gathers the lambs in his arms. When faith is in its infancy, he hath knees to prevent it, breasts for it to suck, that it may not die from the womb.

In what he said to them we have two things, which he said to all that should at any time believe,

1. The character of a true disciple of Christ, *if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed*. When they believed on him as the great prophet they gave up themselves to be his disciples, Now at their entrance into

his school, he lays down this for a settled rule, that he would own none for his disciples, but those that continued in his word. 1. It is implied that there are many who profess themselves Christ's disciples, that are not his disciples indeed, but only in shew and name. 2. It highly concerns those that are not strong in faith, yet to see to it that they be found in the faith; that though they be not disciples of the highest form, yet that they be disciples indeed. 3. Those that seem willing to be Christ's disciples, ought to be told that they had as good never come to him, unless they come with a resolution by his grace to abide by him. Let those that have thoughts of covenanting with Christ, have no thoughts of reserving a power of revocation. Children are sent to school and bound apprentices only for a few years; but those only are Christ's, that are willing to be bound to him for term of life. 4. They only that continue in Christ's word, shall be accepted as his disciples indeed that adhere to his word in every instance without partiality, and abide by it to the end without apostasy. It is *perpetuo* to dwell in Christ's word, as a man doth at home, which is his center, and rest, and refuge. Our converse with the word and conformity to it must be constant. If we continue disciples to the last, then and not otherwise we approve ourselves disciples indeed.

2. The privilege of a true disciple of Christ. Here are two precious promises made to those who thus approve themselves disciples indeed, *ver. 32.*

(1.) *Ye shall know the truth*, shall know all that truth which it is needful and profitable for you to know, and shall be more confirmed in the belief of it, shall know the certainty of it. Note, 1. Even those who are true believers and disciples indeed, yet may be and are much in the dark concerning many things which they should know. God's children are but children and understand and speak as children. Did not we need to be taught we should not need to be disciples. 2. It is a very great privilege to know the truth: to know the particular truths which we are to believe in their mutual dependencies and connections, and the grounds and reason of our belief; to know what is truth, and what proves it to be so. 3. It is a gracious promise of Christ to all who continue in his word, that they shall know the truth as far as is needful and profitable for them. Christ's scholars are sure to be well taught.

2. *The truth shall make you free*. That is, (1.) The truth which Christ teacheth, tends to make men free, Isa. lxi. 1. Justification makes us free from the guilt of sin, by which we were bound over to the judgment of God, and bound under amazing fears; sanctification makes us free from the bondage of corruption, by which we are restrained from that service which is perfect freedom, and constrained to that which is perfect slavery. Gospel truth frees us from the yoke of the ceremonial law, and the more grievous burdens of the traditions of the elders. It makes us free from our spiritual enemies, free in the service of God, free to the privileges of sons, and free of the Jerusalem which is from above, which is free. (2.) The knowing, entertaining, and believing of this truth doth actually make us free, free from prejudices, mistakes, and false notions, than which nothing doth more enslave and entangle the soul; free from the dominion of lust and passion: and restores the soul to the government of itself, by reducing it into obedience to its Creator. The mind by admitting the truth of Christ in the light and power is vastly enlarged, and hath scope and compass given it, is greatly elevated and raised above things of sense, and never acts with so true a liberty, as when it acts under a divine command, 2 Cor. iii. 17. The enemies of Christianity pretend to free-thinking, whereas really those are the freest reasonings that are guided by faith, and those are men of free-thought, whose thoughts are captivated and brought into obedience to Christ.

Secondly, The offence which the carnal Jews took at this doctrine, and their objections against it. Though it was a doctrine that brought glad tidings of liberty to the captives, yet they cavilled at it, *ver. 33*. The Pharisees who grugged this comfortable word to them that believed, the standers-by, who had no part or lot in this matter, they thought themselves reflected upon and affronted by the gracious charter of liberty granted to them that believed; and therefore with a great deal of pride and envy they answered him, *We Jews be Abraham's seed*, and therefore are free-born, and have not lost our birth-right freedom, *we were never in bondage to any man, how sayest thou then, to us Jews, ye shall be made free?*

See here what it was that they were grieved at, it was an innuendo in those words, *Ye shall be made free?* as if the Jewish church or nation were in some sort of bondage which reflected on the Jews in general. And as if all that did not believe in Christ continued in that bondage, which reflected on the Pharisees in particular. Note, The privileges of the faithful, are the envy and vexation of unbelievers, Psalm cxii. 10.

2. See what it was that they alledged against it; whereas Christ intimated that they needed to be made free, they urge, 1. We be Abraham's seed, and Abraham was a prince, and a great man, though we live in Canaan, we are not descended from Canaan, nor under his doom, a servant of servants shall he be: we hold in frank-almoign, and not in villenage. It is common for a sinking decaying family to boast of the glory and dignity of its ancestors, and to borrow honour from that name to which they repay disgrace; so the Jews here did. But this was not all; Abraham was in covenant with God and his children by his right, Rom. xi. 28. Now that covenant no doubt was a free charter, and invested them in privileges not consistent with a state of slavery, Rom. ix. 4. And therefore they think they had no occasion with so great a sum, as they reckoned faith in Christ to be, to obtain this freedom, when they were thus free-born. Note, It is the common fault and folly of those that have pious parentage and education to trust to it, and boast of it, as if it would atone for the want of real holiness. They were Abraham's seed, but what would that avail them, when we find one in hell, that could call Abraham father? Saving benefits are not like common privileges conveyed by entail to us and our issue, nor can a title be made to heaven by descent, neither may we claim as heirs at law, by making out our pedigree; our title is purely by purchase, not our own, but our Redeemer's for us, under certain provisos and limitations, which if we do not observe, it will not avail us to be Abraham's seed. Thus many when they are pressed with the necessity of regeneration, turn it off with this, we are the church's children, but they are not all Israel which are of Israel. 2. *We were never in bondage to any man*. Now observe, 1. How false this allegation was. I wonder how they could have the confidence to say a thing in the face of a congregation, which was so notoriously untrue. Was not the seed of Abraham in bondage to the Egyptians? Were they not often in bondage to the neighbour nations in the time of the judges? Were they not seventy years captives in Babylon? Nay, were they not at this time tributaries to the Romans, and though not in a personal yet in a national bondage to them, and groaning to be made free? and yet to confront Christ, they have the impudence to say, *We were never in bondage*. Thus they would expose Christ to the ill-will both of the Jews, who were very jealous for the honour of their liberty; and of the Romans, who would not be thought to enslave the nations they conquered. 2. How foolish the application was. Christ had spoken of a liberty wherewith the truth would make them free, which must be meant of a spiritual liberty, for truth as it is the enriching, so it is the enfranchising of the mind, and the enlarging of that from

from the captivity of error and prejudice; and yet they plead against the offer of *spiritual* liberty, that they were never in *corporal* thralldom; as if because they were never in bondage to any *man*, they were never in bondage to any *lust*. Note, Carnal hearts are sensible of no other grievances but those that molest the body, and distress their secular affairs. Talk to them of encroachments upon their civil liberty and property; tell them of waste committed upon their lands, or damage done to their houses, and they understand you very well, and can give you a sensible answer, the thing toucheth them, and affects them; but discourse to them of the bondage of sin, a captivity to Satan, and a liberty by Christ; tell them of wrong done to their precious souls, and the hazard of their eternal welfare, and you bring certain strange things to their ears; they say of it, as they did, *Ezek. xx. 49. Doth he not speak parables?* This here was much like the blunder Nicodemus made about being *born again*.

Thirdly, Our Saviour's vindication of his doctrine from these objections, and the further explication of it, *ver. 34—37.* where he doth these four things.

1. He shews that notwithstanding their civil liberties, and their visible church-membership, yet it was possible they might be in a state of bondage, *ver. 34. Whosoever commits sin, though he be of Abraham's seed, and never in bondage to any man, yet he is the servant of sin.* Observe, Christ doth not upbraid them with the falsehood of their plea, or their present bondage, but further explains what he had said for their edification. Thus ministers should with meekness instruct those that oppose them, that they may *recover themselves*, not with passion provoke them to intangle themselves yet more. Now here,

(1.) The preface is very solemn, *Verily, verily, I say unto you*; an awful asseveration, which our Saviour often used to command a reverent attention, and a ready assent. The stile of the prophets was, *Thus saith the Lord*, for they were *faithful as servants*; but Christ being a Son, speaks in his own name, *I say unto you*, I the *Amen*, the faithful witness, he pawns his veracity upon it. I say it to you, who boast of your relation to Abraham, as if that would save you.

(2.) The truth is of universal concern, though here delivered upon a particular occasion, *Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin*, and sadly wants to be made free. A state of sin is a state of bondage.

1. See who it is on whom this brand is fastened, on him that *commits sin*, *ἡμῶν ὁ πῶλον ἀμαρτίας*, every one that *makes sin*. There is not a just man upon earth, that *lives, and sins not*; yet every one that *sins*, is not a servant of sin, for then God would have no servants; but he that *makes sin*, that *makes choice* of sin, prefers the way of wickedness before the way of holiness, *Jer. xlv. 16, 17.* that *makes a covenant* with sin, enters into league with it, and *makes a marriage* with it; that *makes contrivances* of sin, *makes provision* for the flesh, and deviseth iniquity; and that *makes a custom* of sin, who walks after the flesh, and *makes a trade* of sin.

2. See what the brand is which Christ fastens upon them that thus *commit sin*; he stigmatiseth them, gives them a mark of servitude: They are *servants of sin*; imprisoned under the guilt of sin, under an arrest, in hold for it, *concluded under sin*, and they are subject to the power of sin. He is a *servant of sin*, i. e. he makes himself so, and is so accounted; he hath *sold himself to work wickedness*; his lusts give law to him, he is at their beck, and is not his own master. He doth the work of sin, supports its interest, and accepts its wages, *Rom. vi. 16.*

2. He shews them, that being in a state of bondage, their having a room in the house of God would not intitle them to the inheritance of sons: for, *ver. 35. The servant, though he be in the house for a while, yet being but a servant abideth not in the house for ever; services (we say) are no inheritances, they are but temporary, and not for a perpetuity; but the son of the family abideth ever.* Now, 1. This points primarily at the rejection of the Jewish church and nation; Israel had been *God's Son*, his *first-born*, but they wretchedly degenerated into a *servile* disposition, were enslaved to the world and the flesh, and therefore though, by virtue of their birth-right, they thought themselves secure of their church-membership, Christ tells them, that having thus made themselves servants, they should not *abide in the house for ever*. Jerusalem, by opposing the gospel of Christ, which proclaimed liberty, and adhering to the Sinai covenant, which gendered to bondage, after its term was *expired*, came to be *in bondage with her children*, *Gal. iv. 24, 25.* and therefore was unchurched and disfranchised, her charter seized and taken away, and she was cast out as the son of the bond-woman, *Gen. xxi. 20.* Chrysostom gives this sense of this place, Think not to be made free from sin by the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses, for Moses was but a servant, and had not that perpetual authority in the church which the Son had; but if the Son makes you free, it is well, *ver. 36.* But, (2.) It looks further to the rejection of all that are the *servants of sin*, and receive not the *adoption* of the *sons of God*; though those unprofitable servants may be in God's house awhile, as retainers to his family, yet there is a day coming, when the children of the *bond-woman* and of the *free* shall be distinguished. True believers only, who are the children of the promise and of the covenant are accounted free, and shall abide for ever in the house, as Isaac: They shall have a *navel* in the holy place on earth, *Jer. ix. 8.* and *mansions* in the holy place in heaven, *John xiv. 12.*

3. He shews them the way of deliverance out of this state of bondage, into the glorious liberty of the children of God, *Rom. viii. 21.* The case of those that are the servants of sin is sad, but thanks be to God it is not *helpless*, it is not *hopeless*. As it is the privilege of all the sons of the family, and their dignity above the servants, that they abide in the house for ever; so he, who is the *son*, the first-born among many brethren, and the heir of all things, he has a power both of manumission and of adoption, *ver. 36. If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.*

Note, 1. Jesus Christ in the gospel offers us our *freedom*; he has authority and power to *make free*. (1.) To *discharge prisoners*; this he doth in *justification*, by making satisfaction for our *guilt*, on which the gospel-offer is grounded, which is to all a conditional *act of indemnity*, and to all true believers upon their believing an absolute *charter of pardon*; and for our *debts*, for which we were by the law arrested and in execution; Christ as our surety, or rather our *bail* (for he was not originally bound *with us*, but upon our insolvency bound *for us*) compounds with the creditor, answers the demands of injured justice, which more than an *equivalent*, takes the *bond* and *judgment* into his own hands, and gives them up *cancelled* to all that by faith and repentance give him (if I may so say) a *counter security* to save his honour harmless, and so they are *made free*; and from the debt, and every part thereof, they are for ever acquitted, exonerated and discharged, and a general release sealed of all actions and claims; whilst against those who refuse to come up to these terms, the securities lie still in the Redeemer's hands in full force. (2.) He has a power to *rescue bond-slaves*, and this he doth in *sanctification*; by the powerful arguments of his gospel, and the powerful operations of his Spirit, he breaks the power of corruption in the soul, rallies the scattered forces of reason and virtue, and fortifies God's interest against sin and Satan, and so the soul is made free. (3.) He has a power to *naturalize strangers and foreigners*, and this he doth in *adoption*. This is a further act of grace, we are not only forgiven and healed, but

referred, there is a charter of privileges as well as pardon; and thus the Son makes us free *denizens* of the kingdom of priests, the holy nation, the new Jerusalem.

2. Those whom Christ makes free, are *free indeed*. It is not *ἀλλοτρίως*, the word used, *ver. 31.* for disciples *indeed*, but *οὕτως*, *really*. It notes, 1. The truth and certainty of the promise, the liberty which the Jews boasted of was an *imaginary* liberty, they boasted of a *false gift*; but the liberty which Christ gives is a certain thing, it is real, and has real effects; the servants of sin promise themselves liberty, and fancy themselves free when they have broke religion's bands asunder; but they cheat themselves, none are *free indeed*, but those whom Christ *makes free*. 2. It notes the singular excellency of the freedom promised; it is a freedom deserves the name, in comparison with which all other liberties are no better than slaveries, so much doth it turn to the honour and advantage of those that are *made free* by it. 2. It is a *glorious* liberty. It is that which *is*; (so *οὕτως* signifies) it is *substance*, *Prov. viii. 21.* while the things of the world are shadows, things that are not.

4. He applies this to these unbelieving, cavilling Jews. In answer to their boasts of relation to Abraham, *ver. 37. I know very well that ye are Abraham's seed, but now ye seek to kill me*, and therefore have forfeited the honour of your relation to Abraham, *because my word hath no place in you.* Observe here,

1. The dignity of their extraction allowed them, *I know that ye are Abraham's seed*, every one knows it, and it is your honour. He grants them what was true, and in what they said that was false, that they were *never* in bondage to any, he doth not *contradict* them, for he studied to *profit* them, and not to *provoke* them, and therefore said that which would please them, *I know that ye are Abraham's seed*. They boasted of their descent from Abraham, as that which *aggrandized* their names, and made them exceeding honourable, whereas really it did but *aggravate* their crimes, and make them exceeding sinful. Out of their own mouths will he judge vain-glorious hypocrites who boast of their parentage and education: Are you Abraham's seed? why then did not you tread in the steps of his faith and obedience.

2. The disagreeableness of their practice with this dignity; *but ye seek to kill me*. They had attempted it several times, and were now designing it, which quickly appeared, *ver. 59.* when they *took up stones to cast at him*. Christ knows all the wickedness not only which men *do*, but which they *seek* and design, and endeavour to do. To seek to kill any innocent man, is a crime black enough, but to *compass and imagine* the death of him that was King of kings, was a crime which we want words to express the heinousness of.

3. The reason of this inconsistency; why were they that were Abraham's seed, so very inveterate against Abraham's promised seed, in whom they and all the families of the earth should be blessed: Our Saviour here tells them, it is because *my word hath no place in you*, *ἡ χρῆσις ἐν ὑμῖν*, *Non capit in vobis*, so the vulgar; *my word doth not take with you*, you have no inclination to it, no relish of it, other things are more taking, more pleasing. Or, it doth not *take hold of you*, it hath no power over you, makes no impression upon you. Some of the critics read it, *My word doth not penetrate into you*; it descended as the rain, but it came upon them as the rain upon the rock, which runs off, and did not soak into their hearts, as the rain upon the ploughed ground. The Syriac reads it, *Because ye do not acquiesce in my word*; you are not persuaded of the truth of it, nor pleased with the goodness of it. Our translation is very significant, it *has no place in you*. They sought to kill him, and so effectually to silence him, not because he had done them any harm, but because they could not bear the convincing, commanding power of his word. Note, 1. The words of Christ ought to have a place in us, the innermost and uppermost place; a *dwelling* place, as a man at home, and not as a stranger or sojourner, a *working* place, it must have room to operate, to work sin out of us, and to work grace in us; it must have a *ruling* place, its place must be *upon the throne*, it must dwell in us richly. 2. There are many that make a profession of religion, in whom the word of Christ has no place; they will not *allow* it a place, for they do not like it; Satan doth all he can to *displace* it; and other things possess the place it should have in us. 3. Where the word of God has no place, no good is to be expected, for room is left there for all wickedness. If the unclean spirit find the heart empty of Christ's word, he *enters in and dwells there*.

38. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your Father.

39. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. 40. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. 41. Ye do the deeds of your Father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; We have one Father, even God. 42. Jesus saith unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceed forth, and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. 43. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. 44. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. 45. And because I tell you the truth ye believe me not. 46. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? 47. He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

Here Christ and the Jews are still at it; he sets himself to convince and convert them, while they still set themselves to contradict and oppose him.

1. He here traceth the difference between his sentiments and theirs to a different rise and original, *ver. 38. I speak that which I have seen with my Father, and ye do what ye have seen with your father*. Here are two fathers spoken of according to the two families, into which the sons of men are divided; God and the devil, and without controversy these are contrary the one to the other.

(1.) Christ's

(1.) Christ's doctrine was from heaven, it was copied out of the counsels of infinite wisdom, and the kind intentions of eternal love. (1.) *I speak that which I have seen.* The discoveries Christ has made us, of God and another world, are not grounded upon guess and hearsay, but upon ocular inspection; so that he was thoroughly apprized of the nature, and ascertained of the truth of all he said. He that is given to be a witness to the people, is an eye-witness, and therefore unexceptionable. (2.) It is what I have seen with my Father. The doctrine of Christ is not a plausible hypothesis, supported by probable arguments, but it is an exact counterpart of the incontestable truths lodged in the eternal mind. It was not only what he had heard from his Father, but what he had seen with him, when the counsel of peace was between them both. Moses spake what he heard from God, but he might not see the face of God; Paul had been in the third heaven, but what he had seen there, he could not, he must not utter; for it was Christ's prerogative to have seen what he spoke, and to speak what he had seen.

(2.) Their doings were from hell; *Ye do that which ye have seen with your father.* Ye do, by your own works, father yourselves, for it is evident whom ye resemble, and therefore easy to find out your original. As a child that it trained up with his father, learns his father's words and fashions, and grows like him by an affected imitation, as well as by a natural image, so these Jews, by their malicious opposition to Christ and the gospel, made themselves as like the devil, as if they had industriously set him before them for their pattern.

2. He takes off and answers their vain-glorious boasts of relation to Abraham and to God, as their fathers, and shews the vanity and falsehood of their pretensions.

First, They pleaded relation to Abraham, and he replied to that plea, *They said, Abraham is our father,* ver. 39. In this they intended, (1.) To do honour to themselves, and to make themselves look great. They had forgot the mortification given them by that acknowledgment prescribed them, *Deut. xxvi. 5. A Syrian ready to perish was my father.* And the charge exhibited against their degenerate ancestors (whose steps they trod in, and not those of the first founder of the family) *Thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite,* Ezek. xvi. 3. As it is common for those families that are sinking and going to decay, to brag most of their pedigree, so it is common for those churches that are corrupt and depraved, to value themselves upon their antiquity and the eminence of their first planters, *Fuimus Troes, suit Ilum.* (2.) They designed to cast an odium upon Christ, as if he reflected upon the patriarch Abraham, in speaking of their father, as one they had learned evil from. See how they sought an occasion to quarrel with him.

Now Christ overthrows this plea, and discovers the vanity of it by a plain and cogent argument, Abraham's children will do the works of Abraham, but ye do not do Abraham's works, therefore ye are not Abraham's children.

1. The proposition is plain, *If ye were Abraham's children,* such children of Abraham as could claim an interest in the covenant made with him and his seed, which would indeed put an honour upon you, then ye would do the works of Abraham, for to those only of Abraham's house, who kept the way of the Lord, as Abraham did, would God perform what he had spoken, Gen. xviii. 19. Those only are reckoned the seed of Abraham, to whom the promise belongs, that tread in the steps of his faith and obedience, Rom. iv. 12. Though the Jews had their genealogies, and kept them exact, yet they could not by them make out their relation to Abraham, so as to take the benefit of the old entail, (*per formam doni*) unless they walked in the same spirit; good women's relation to Sarah is proved only by this, *whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well,* and no longer, 1 Pet. iii. 6. Note, Those who would approve themselves Abraham's seed, must not only be of Abraham's faith, but do Abraham's works, James ii. 21, 22. must come at God's call, as he did, must follow God wherever he leads them, must resign their dearest comforts to him, must be strangers and sojourners in this world, must keep up the worship of God in their families, and always walk before God in their uprightness, for these were the works of Abraham.

2. The assumption is evident likewise, *But ye do not do the works of Abraham,* for ye seek to kill me, a man that has told you the truth, which I have heard of God, this did not Abraham, ver. 40.

(1.) He shews them what their work was; their present work, which they were now about; they sought to kill him; and three things are intimated as an aggravation of their intention. (1.) They were so unnatural as to seek the life of a man, a man like themselves, bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh, who had done them no harm, nor given them any provocation. Ye imagine mischief against a man, Psalm lxii. 3. (2.) They were so ungrateful as to seek the life of one that had told them the truth, had not only done them no injury, but done them the greatest kindness that could be; had not only not imposed upon them with a lye, but had instructed them in the most necessary and important truths; was he therefore become their enemy? (3.) They were so ungodly as to seek the life of one that told them the truth, which he had heard from God, who was a messenger sent from God to them, so that their attempt against him was quasi deicideum, an act of malice against God himself. This was their work, and they persisted in it.

(2.) He shews them that this did not become the children of Abraham, for this did not Abraham. 1. He did nothing like this. He was famous for his humanity, witness his rescue of the captives; and for his piety; witness his obedience to the heavenly vision in many instances, and some tender ones. Abraham believed God, these were obstinate in unbelief; Abraham followed God, they fought against him; so that he would be ignorant of them, and would not acknowledge them, they were so unlike him, Isa. lxiii. 16. See Jer. xxii. 15, 16, 17. 2. He would not have done thus if he had lived now, or I had lived then. *Huc Abraham non fecisset,* so some read it. We should thus reason ourselves out of any way of wickedness: would Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob have done so? We cannot expect to be ever with them, if we be never like them.

3. The conclusion follows of course, ver. 41. Whatever your boasts and pretensions be, you are not Abraham's children, but father yourselves upon another family, ver. 41. there is a father whose deeds ye do, whose spirit ye are of, and whom ye resemble. He doth not yet say plainly that he means the devil, till they, by their continued cavils, forced him to explain himself; which teacheth us to treat even bad men with civility and respect, and not to be forward to say that of them, or to them, which, though true, sounds harsh. He tried whether they would suffer their own consciences to infer from what he said, that they were the devil's children, and it is better hear from them now we are called to repent, that is, to change our father, and change our family by changing our spirit and way, than hear it from Christ in the great day.

Secondly, So far were they from owning their unworthiness of relation to Abraham, that they plead relation to God himself as their Father: *We be not born of fornication,* we are not bastards, but legitimate sons; *we have one Father, even God.*

1. Some understand this literally. They were not the sons of the bond-woman, as the Ishmaelites were; not begotten in incest, as the Moabites

and Ammonites were; Deut. xxiii. 8. nor were they a spurious brood in Abraham's family, but Hebrews of the Hebrews; and being born in lawful wedlock, they might call God Father, who instituted that honourable estate in innocency; for a legitimate seed, not tainted with divorces or the plurality of wives, is called a seed of God, Mal. iii. 15.

2. Others take it figuratively. They begin to be aware now, that Christ spoke of a spiritual not a carnal fatherhood; of the father of their religion, and so,

1. They deny themselves to be a generation of idolaters; *we be not born of fornication,* are not the children of idolatrous parents, nor have been bred up in idolatrous worships. Idolatry is often spoke of as spiritual whoredom, and idolaters as children of whoredoms, Hosea ii. 4. Jer. lvi. 3. Now if they mean that they were not the posterity of idolaters, the allegation was false, for no nation was more addicted to idolatry than the Jews before the captivity; if they mean no more, but that they themselves were not idolaters what then? A man may be free from idolatry, and yet perish in another iniquity, and be shut out of Abraham's covenant. *If thou commit no idolatry* (apply it to this spiritual fornication) yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the covenant. A rebellious prodigal son will be disinherited, though he be not born of fornication.

2. They boast themselves to be true worshippers of the true God. We have not many fathers, as the heathen had, *gods many, and lords many,* and yet were without God, as *filius populi* has many fathers, and yet none certain; no, *the Lord our God is one Lord and one Father,* and therefore it is well with us. Note, Those flatter themselves and put a damning cheat to their own souls, who imagine that their professing the true religion and worshipping the true God will save them: though they worship not God in the spirit, and in truth, and are true to their profession.

Now our Saviour gives a full answer to this fallacious plea, ver. 42, 43. and proves by two arguments, that they had no right to call God father.

1. They did not love Christ: *If God were your Father, ye would love me.* He had disproved their relation to Abraham, by their going about to kill him, ver. 40. but here he disproves their relation to God by their not loving and owning him; a man may pass for a child of Abraham, if he do not appear an enemy to Christ by gross sin; but he cannot approve himself a child of God, unless he be a faithful friend and follower of Christ. Note, All that have God for their father, have a true love to Jesus Christ, and esteem of his person, a grateful sense of his love, a sincere affection to his cause and kingdom, a complacency in the salvation wrought out by him, and in the method and terms of it, and a care to keep his commandments, which is the surest evidence of our love to him. We are here in a state of probation upon our trial, how we will carry ourselves to our maker, and accordingly it will be with us in the state of retribution; God has taken various methods to prove us, and this was one; he sent his Son into the world, with sufficient proofs of his sonship and mission, concluding that all that called him Father, would kiss his Son, and bid him welcome, who was the first-born among many brethren; see 1 John v. 1. By this our adoption will be proved or disproved, did we love Christ or no? *If any man do not,* he is so far from being a child of God, that he is anathema, accursed, 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

Now our Saviour proves, that if they were God's children, they would love him, for saith he, *I proceeded forth, and came from God.* They will love him, for,

(1.) He was the Son of God; *I proceeded forth from God* ἔξωκεν; this means his divine ἰδέσθαι, or original from the Father, by the communication of the divine essence, and also the union of the divine λογος, to his human nature, so Dr. Whitby. Now this could not but recommend him to the affections of all that were born of God. Christ is called the beloved, because being beloved of the Father, he is certainly the beloved of all the saints. Eph. i. 6.

(2.) He was sent of God, came from him as an ambassador to the world of mankind. He did not come of himself, as the false prophets, who had not either their mission or their message from God, Jer. xxiii. 21. Observe the emphasis he lays upon this, *I came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me;* he had both his credentials and his instructions from God; he came to gather together in one the children of God, John xi. 52. to bring many sons to glory, Heb. ii. 10. And would not all God's children embrace with both arms a messenger sent from their Father on such errands? But these Jews made it appear they were nothing akin to God, by their want of affection to Jesus Christ.

2. They did not understand him. It was a sign they did not belong to God's family, that they did not understand the language and dialect of the family; *Ye do not understand my speech,* ver. 43. τὴν λαλίαν τῆς ἡμέρας. Christ's speech was divine and heavenly, but intelligible enough to those that were acquainted with the voice of Christ in the Old Testament, those that had made the word of the Creator familiar to them, need no other key to the dialect of the Redeemer; and yet these Jews make strange of the doctrine of Christ, and find knots in it, and I know not what stumbling stones. Could a Galilean be known by his speech? An Ephraimite by his sibboleth? And would any have the confidence to call God Father, to whom the Son of God was a Barbarian, even when he spoke the will of God in the words of the Spirit of God. Note, Those who are not acquainted with the divine speech, have reason to fear that they are strangers to the divine nature. Christ spoke the words of God (John iii. 34.) in the dialect of the kingdom of God, and yet they who pretended to belong to the kingdom, understood not the idioms and properties of it, but, like strangers and rude ones too, ridiculed it.

And the reason why they did not understand Christ's speech made the matter much worse, even because ye cannot hear my word, i. e. ye cannot persuade yourselves to hear it attentively, impartially, and without prejudice, as it should be heard. The meaning of this cannot, is an obstinate will not; as the Jews could not hear Stephen, Acts vii. 57. nor Paul, ver. xxii. 22. Note, The rooted antipathy of men's corrupt hearts to the doctrine of Christ, is the true reason of their ignorance of it, and their errors and mistakes about it. They do not like it or love it, and therefore they will not understand it; like Peter, who pretended he knew not what the damsel said, (Matt. xxvi. 70.) when in truth he knew not what to say to it, *Ye cannot hear my words,* for you have stopped your ears, Psalm lvii. 4, 5. and God, in a way of righteous judgment, has made your ears heavy, Isa. vi. 10.

3. Having thus disproved their relation, both to Abraham and to God, he comes next to tell them plainly whose children they were, *ye are of your father the devil,* ver. 44. If they be not God's children they are the devil's for God and Satan divide the world of mankind; the devil is therefore said to work in the children of disobedience, Eph. ii. 2. All wicked people are the devil's children, children of Belial, 2 Cor. vi. 15. the serpent's seed, Gen. iii. 15. children of the wicked one, Matt. xiii. 38. They partake of his nature, bear his image, obey his commands, and follow his example. Idolaters said to a stock, *thou art my father,* Jer. ii. 27.

This is a high charge, and sounds very harsh and horrid; that any of the children

children of men, especially the church's children, should be called children of the devil, and therefore our Saviour fully proves it,

1. By a general argument, *The lusts of your father, you will do*, *Σὺ γὰρ τοιοῦτος*. 1. You do the devil's lusts, the lusts which he would have you to fulfil; you gratify and please him, and comply with his temptations, and are led captives by him at his will; Nay, you do those lusts which the devil himself fulfils. Fleshly lusts and worldly lusts the devil tempts men to, but being a spirit, he cannot fulfil them himself. The peculiar lusts of the devil are spiritual wickednesses, the lusts of the intellectual powers, and their corrupt reasonings; pride and envy, wrath and malice; enmity to that which is good, and enticing others to that which is evil; these are lusts which the devil fulfils, and those who are under the dominion of these lusts resemble the devil, as the child doth the parent. The more there is of contemplation and contrivance, and secret complacency in sin, the more it resembles the lust of the devil. 2. You will do the devil's lusts: The more there is of the will in these lusts, the more there is of the devil in them. When sin is committed of choice and not by surprise, with pleasure and not with reluctancy, when it is persisted in with a daring presumption and a desperate resolution, like their's that said, *We have loved strangers, and after them we will go*, then the sinner will do the devil's lusts. The lusts of your father you delight to do; so Dr. Hammond, they are rolled under the tongue as a sweet morsel.

2. By two particular instances, wherein they manifestly resemble the devil, murder and lying. The devil is an enemy to life, because God is the God of life, and life is the happiness of man; and an enemy to truth, because God is the God of truth, and truth is the bond of human society.

1. He was a murderer from the beginning, not from his own beginning, for he was created an angel of light, and had a first state, which was pure and good, but from the beginning of his apostacy, which was soon after the creation of man. He was ἀνθρωποκτόνος, homicida, a man-slayer; 1. He was a hater of man, and so in affection and disposition a murderer of him. He has his name Satan, from *Satanah*, hatred. He maligned God's image upon man, envied his happiness, and earnestly desired his ruin, was an avowed enemy to the whole race. (2.) He was man's tempter to that sin which brought death into the world, and so he was effectually the murderer of all mankind, which in Adam had but one neck. He was a murderer of souls, deceived them into sin, and by it slew them, Rom. vii. 11. poisoned man with the forbidden fruit, and to aggravate the matter made him his own murderer. Thus he was not only at the beginning, but from the beginning, which intimates that thus he has been ever since; as he began, so he continues the murderer of men by his temptations. The great tempter is the great destroyer. The Jews called the devil, the angel of death. 3. He was the first wheel in the first murder that ever was committed by Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother, 1 John iii. 12. If the devil had not been very strong in Cain, he could not have done such an unnatural thing as to kill his own brother. Cain killing his brother by the instigation of the devil, the devil is called the murderer, which doth not speak Cain's personal guilt the less, but the devil's the more, whose torments we have reason to think will be the greater when the time comes, for all that wickedness which he has drawn men into. See what reason we have to stand upon our guard against the wiles of the devil, and never to hearken to him, for he is a murderer, and certainly aims to do us a mischief, even when he speaks fair; and to wonder that he who is the murderer of the children of men, should yet be, by their own consent, so much their master.

Now herein these Jews were followers of him, and were murderers like him, murderers of souls, which they led blindfold into the ditch, and made the children of hell; sworn enemies to Christ, and now ready to be his betrayers and murderers, for the same reason that Cain killed Abel. These Jews were that seed of the serpent, that were to bruise the heel of the seed of the woman; now ye seek to kill me.

2. He was a liar. A lie is opposed to truth, 1 John ii. 21. and accordingly the devil is here described to be,

1. An enemy to truth, and therefore to Christ.

(1.) He is a deserter from the truth; he abode not in the truth, did not continue in the purity and rectitude of his nature wherein he was created, but left his first state; when he degenerated from goodness he departed from truth, for his apostacy was founded on a lie. The angels were the hosts of the Lord, those that fell were not true to their commander and sovereign, they were not to be trusted, being charged with folly and defection, Job iv. 18. By the truth here we may understand the revealed will of God concerning the salvation of man by Jesus Christ, the truth which Christ was now preaching, and which the Jews opposed: herein they did like their father the devil, who seeing the honour put upon the human nature in the first Adam, and foreseeing the much greater honour intended it in the second Adam, would not be reconciled to that council of God, nor stand in the truth, concerning it, but from a spirit of pride and envy, set himself to resist it, and to thwart the designs of it; and so did these Jews here as his children and agents.

(2.) He is destitute of the truth; there is no truth in him. His interest in the world is supported by lies and falsehoods, and there is no truth, nothing you can confide in him, nor in any thing he saith or doth. The notions he propagates concerning good and evil, are false and erroneous, his proofs are lying wonders, his temptations are all cheats; he has great knowledge of the truth, but having no affection to it, but on the contrary being a sworn enemy to it, he is said to have no truth in him.

2. He is a friend and patron of lying. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own. Three things are here said of the devil, with reference to the sin of lying.

1. That he is a liar; his oracles were lying oracles, his prophets lying prophets, and the images in which he was worshipped, teachers of lies; he tempted our first parents with a downright lie: all his temptations are carried on by lies, calling evil good, and good evil, and promising impunity in sin; he knows them to be lies, and suggests them with an intention to deceive and so to destroy. When he now contradicted the gospel in the Scribes, and Pharisees, it was by lies, and when afterwards he corrupted it in the man of sin, it was by strong delusions, and a great complicated lie.

2. That when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, ἐκ τῆς ἑωυτοῦ. It is the proper idiom of his language; of his own, not of God; his Creator never put it into him. When men speak a lie, they borrow it from the devil, Satan fills their hearts to lie, Acts v. 3. But when the devil speaks a lie, the model of it is of his own framing, the motives to it from himself, which speaks the desperate depth of wickedness, into which those apostate spirits are sunk; as in their first defection they had no tempter; so their sinfulness is still their own.

3. That he is the father of it: ἀντὶς. (1.) He is the father of every lie; not only of the lies which he himself suggests, but of those which others speak; he is the author and founder of all lies; when men speak lies, they speak from him, and as his mouth, they come originally from him and bear his image. (2.) He is the father of every liar; so it may be understood. God made men with a disposition to truth, it is congruous to reason

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and natural light, to the order of our faculties, and the laws of society, that we should speak truth; but the devil, the author of sin, the spirit that works in the children of disobedience, hath so corrupted the nature of man, that the wicked are said to be estranged from the womb, speaking lies, Psalm lviii. 3. He hath taught them with their tongues to use deceit, Rom. iii. 13. He is the father of liars that begat them, that trained them up in the way of lying, whom they resemble and obey, and with whom all liars shall have their portion for ever. Christ having thus proved all murderers and all liars to be the devil's children, he leaves it to the consciences of his hearers to say, thou art the man.

But he comes in the following verses to assist them in the application of it to themselves; he doth not call them liars, but shews them that they were no friends to truth, and therein resembled him, who abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.

Two things he chargeth upon them.

1. That they would not believe the word of truth, ver. 45. οὐκ ἔτι τῆς ἀληθείας λόγους ἀκούετε μου. Two ways it may be taken, (1.) Though I tell you the truth, yet you will not believe me (2.) that I do so. Though he gave abundant proof of his commission from God, and his affection to the children of men, yet they would not believe that he told them the truth. Now was truth fallen in the street, and could not enter, Isa. lix. 14, 15. The greatest truths with some gained not the least credit; for they rebelled against the light, Job xxiv. 13. Or, (2.) Because I tell you the truth (so we read it) therefore, ye believe me not. They would not receive him, nor entertain him as a prophet, because he told them some displeasing truths which they did not care to hear of, told them the truth concerning themselves and their own case, shewing them their faces in a glass, that would not flatter them; therefore they would not believe a word he said. Miserable is the case of those to whom the light of divine truth is become a torment.

Now to shew them the unreasonableness of their infidelity, he condescends to put the matter to this fair issue, ver. 46. He and they being contrary, either he was in an error or they were. Now take it either way.

1. If he were in an error, why did not they convince him? The falsehood of pretending prophets was discovered either by the ill tendency of their doctrines, Deut. xiii. 2. or by the ill tenor of their conversation, ye shall know them by their fruits; but, (saith Christ) which of you, you of the Sanhedrin, that take upon you to judge of prophets, which of you convinceth me of sin? They accused him of some of the worst of crimes, gluttony, drunkenness, blasphemy, sabbath-breaking, confederacy with Satan, and what not? But they were all malicious, groundless calumnies, and such as every one that knew him knew to be utterly false. When they had done their utmost by trick and artifice, subornation and perjury to prove some crime upon him, the very judge that condemned him, owned he found no fault in him.

The sin he here challengeth them to convict him of is, (1.) An inconsistent doctrine. They had heard his testimony, could they shew any thing in it absurd or unworthy to be believed? any contradiction, either of himself or of the scriptures, or any corruption of truth or manners insinuated by his doctrine, John xviii. 20. Or, (2.) An incongruous conversation. Which of you can justly charge me with any thing in word or deed, unbecoming a prophet? See the wonderful condescension of our Lord Jesus, that he demanded not credit any further than the allowed motives of credibility support his demands. See Jer. ii. 5—33. Micah. vi. 3. Ministers may from hence learn, (1.) To walk so circumspectly, as that it may not be in the power of their most strict observers to convince them of sin; that the ministry be not blamed. The only way not to be convicted of sin is not to sin. (2.) To be willing to admit a scrutiny, though we are confident in many things that we are in the right, yet we should be willing to have it tried whether we be not in the wrong. See Job vi. 24.

2. If they were in an error, why were not they convicted by him? If I say the truth why do ye not believe me? If you cannot convince me of error, you must own that I say the truth, and why do ye not then give me credit? Why will ye not deal with me upon trust? None. If men would but enquire into the reasons of their infidelity, and examine why they do not believe that which they cannot gainsay, they would find themselves reduced to such absurdities, as they could not but be ashamed of; for it will be found, that the reason why we believe not in Jesus Christ, is because we are not willing to part with our sins, and deny ourselves, and serve God faithfully; that we are not of the Christian religion, because we would not indeed be of any, and unbelief of our Redeemer resolves itself into a downright rebellion against our Creator.

2. Another thing charged upon them is, that they would not hear the words of God, ver. 47. which further shews how groundless their claim of revelation to God was. Here is,

1. A doctrine laid down. He that is of God, heareth God's words; that is, (1.) He is willing and ready to hear them, is sincerely desirous to know what the mind of God is, and cheerfully embraceth whatever he knows to be so. God's words have such an authority over, and such an agreeableness with all that are born of God, that they meet them, as the child Samuel did with, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. Let the word of the Lord come. (2.) He apprehends and discerns them, he so hears them, as to perceive the voice of God in them, which the natural man doth not, 1 Cor. ii. 14. He that is of God, is soon aware of the discoveries he makes of himself of the nearness of his name, Psalm lxxv. 1. As they of the family know the master's tread, and the master's knock, and open to him immediately, Luke xii. 36. As the sheep know the voice of their shepherd from that of a stranger, John x. 4, 5. Cant. ii. 8.

2. The application of this doctrine for the conviction of these unbelieving Jews. Ye therefore hear him not; that is, ye heed not, ye understand not, ye believe not the words of God, nor care to hear them, because ye are not of God. Your being thus deaf and dead to the words of God, is a plain evidence that ye are not of God. It is in his word that God manifests himself and is present among us, we are therefore reckoned to be well or ill affected to God, according as we are well or ill affected to his word; see 2 Cor. iv. 4. 1 John iv. 6. Or, their not being of God, was the reason why they did not profitably hear the words of God, which Christ spoke; therefore they did not understand and believe him, not because the things themselves were obscure or wanted evidence, but because the hearers were not of God, were not born again. If the word of the kingdom do not bring forth fruit, the blame is to be laid upon the soil, not upon the seed, as appears by the parable of the sower, Matt. xiii. 3.

48. Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? 49. Jesus answered I have not a devil? but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. 50. And I seek not mine own glory; there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

Here is, 1. The malice of hell breaking out in the base language which the unbelieving Jews gave to our Lord Jesus. Hitherto they had cavilled at his doctrine, and had made invidious remarks upon that, but having shewed themselves uneasy when he complained, *ver. 43—47.* that they would not hear him, now at length they fall to downright railing, *ver. 48.* They were not the common people, but, as it should seem, the Scribes and Pharisees, the topping men, who when they saw themselves convicted of an obstinate infidelity, scornfully turned off the conviction with this, *Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil!* See here, see it and wonder, see it and tremble.

1. What was the blasphemous character commonly given of our Lord Jesus among the wicked Jews, to which they refer.

(1.) That he was a Samaritan, *i. e.* that he was an enemy to their church and nation, one that they hated and could not endure. Thus they exposed him to the ill-will of the people, with whom you could not put a man into a worse name; than to call him a Samaritan. If he had been a Samaritan, he had been punishable, by the *beating of the rebels* (as they called it) for coming into the temple. They had often called him a Galilean, a mean man, but as if that were not enough, though it contradicted the other, they will have him a Samaritan, an ill man. The Jews to this day call the Christians in reproach, *Cuthæi, Samaritans.* Note, Great endeavours have in all ages been used to make good people odious by putting them under black characters, and it is easy to run that down with a crowd and a cry, which is once put into an ill name. Perhaps because Christ justly inveighed against the pride and tyranny of the priests and elders, they hereby suggest that he aimed at the ruin of their church, in aiming at its reformation, and was *falling away* to the Samaritans.

(2.) That he had a devil. Either, 1. That he was in league with the devil; having reproached his doctrine as tending to Samaritanism, here they reflect upon his miracles as done in combination with Beelzebub. Or rather, (2.) That he was possessed with a devil, that he was a melancholy man, whose brain was clouded, or a mad man, whose brain was heated, and that which he said was no more to be believed, than the extravagant rambles of a distracted man or one in a delirium. Thus the divine revelation of those things which are above the discovery of reason, have been often branded with the charge of enthusiasm, and the prophet was called a mad fellow, *2 Kings ix. 11.* *Hosca ix. 7.* The inspiration of the pagan oracles and prophets was indeed a frenzy, and those that had it were for the time beside themselves, but that which was truly divine was nothing so. *Wisdom is justified of her children,* as wisdom indeed.

2. How they undertook to justify this character, and applied it to the present occasion, *Say we not well that thou art so?* One would think his excellent discourses should have altered their opinion of him, and have made them recant; but instead of that, their hearts were more hardened, and their prejudices confirmed. They value themselves by their enmity to Christ, as if they had never spoken better than when they spoke the worst they could of Jesus Christ. Those have arrived to the highest pitch of wickedness, who avow their impiety, repeat what they should retract, and justify themselves in that for which they ought to condemn themselves. It is bad to say and do ill, but it is worse to stand to it. *I do well to be angry.* When Christ spoke with so much boldness against the sins of the great men, and thereby incensed them against him, they who were sensible of no interest but what is secular and sensual, concluded him beside himself, for they think none but a mad man will lose his preferment, and hazard his life for his religion and conscience.

2. Here is the meekness and mercifulness of heaven shining in Christ's reply to this vile calumny, *ver. 45—50.*

1. He denies their charge against him; *I have not a devil;* as Paul, *Acts xxvi. 25.* *I am not mad.* The imputation is unjust, I am neither acted by a devil, nor in compact with one; and this he evidenced by what he did against the devil's kingdom. He takes no notice of their calling him a Samaritan, because it was a calumny that disproved itself, it was a personal reflection, and not worth taking notice of, but saying he had a devil reflected on his commission, and therefore he answered that. St. Augustin gives this descant upon his not saying any thing to their calling him a Samaritan, that he was indeed that good Samaritan spoken of in the parable, *Luke x. 35.*

2. He asserts the sincerity of his own intentions. But *I honour my Father.* They suggested that he took undue honours to himself, and derogated from the honour due to God only, both which he denies here in saying, that he made it his business to honour his Father, and him only. It also proves that he had not a devil, for if he had, he would not honour God. Note, They who can truly say they make it their constant care to honour God, are sufficiently armed against the censures and reproaches of men.

3. He complains of the wrong they did him by their calumnies, *ye do dishonour me.* By this it appears, that as man, he had a tender sense of the disgrace and indignity done him, reproach was a sword in his bones, and yet he underwent it for our salvation. It is the will of God, that all men should honour the Son, yet there are many that dishonour him; such a contradiction is there in the carnal mind to the will of God. Christ honoured his Father so as never man did, and yet was himself dishonoured so as never man was; for though God has promised that those that honour him, he will honour, he never promised that men should honour them.

4. He clears himself from the imputation of vain-glory, in saying this concerning himself, *ver. 50.* See here,

(1.) His contempt of worldly honour; *I seek not mine own glory.* he did not aim at that in what he had said of himself, or against his persecutors; he did not court the applause of men, nor covet preferment in the world, but industriously declined both. He did not seek his own glory distinct from his Father's, nor had any separate interest of his own. For men to search their own glory, is not glory indeed, *Prov. xxv. 27.* but their shame rather, to be so much out in their aim. This comes in here as a reason why Christ made so light of their reproaches, *you do dishonour me,* but cannot disturb me, shall not disquiet me, for *I seek not mine own glory.* Note, Those that are dead to men's praise, can safely bear their contempt.

(2.) His comfort under worldly dishonour, *there is one that seeketh and judgeth.* In two things Christ made it appear he sought not out his own glory, and here he tells us what satisfied him as to both. (1.) He did not court men's respects, but was indifferent to them, and in reference to this he saith, *there is one that seeketh,* that will secure and advance my interest in the esteem and affections of the people, while I am in no care about it. Note, God will seek their honour, that do not seek their own; for before honour is humility. (2.) He did not revenge men's affronts, but was unconcerned at them, and in reference to this he saith, *there is one that judgeth,* that will vindicate my honour, and severely reckon with those that trample upon it; probably he refers here to the judgments that were coming upon the nation of the Jews for the indignation they did to the Lord Jesus. See *Psaln xxxviii. 13, 14, 15.* *I heard not, for thou wilt hear.* If we undertake to judge for ourselves, whatever damage we sustain, our amends is in our own hands, but if we be, as we ought to be, humble appellants and patient expectants we shall find to our comfort, *there is one that judgeth.*

51. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. 52. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil, Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. 53. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? And the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? 54. Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me: of whom ye say, that he is your God: 55. Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you: but I know him and keep his saying. 56. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. 57. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? 58. Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. 59. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

In these verses we have,

First, The doctrine of the immortality of believers laid down, *ver. 51.* It is ushered in with the usual solemn preface, *Verily, verily, I say unto you,* which commands both attention and assent, and this is it he saith, *If a man keep my saying he shall never see death.* Where we have,

1. The character of a believer, he is one that keeps the sayings of the Lord Jesus, *τιν λόγων τιν ἰμῶν, my word;* that word of mine which I have delivered to you; this we must not only receive, but keep; not only have, but hold. We must keep it in mind and memory, keep it in love and affection, so keep it as in nothing to violate it or go contrary to it. Keep it without spot, *1 Tim. vi. 19.* keep it as a trust committed to us; keep it as our way, keep to it as our rule.

2. The privilege of a believer. He shall by no means see death for ever. So it is in the original. Not as if the bodies of believers were secured from the stroke of death, no, even the children of the most high must die like men, and the followers of Christ have been, more than other men, in deaths often, and killed all the day long; how then is this promise made good, that they shall not see death? Ans. 1. The property of death is so altered to them, that they do not see it as death, they do not see the terror of death, it is quite taken off; their sight doth not terminate in death as theirs doth who live by sense; no, they look so clearly, so comfortably through death, and beyond death, and are so taken up with their state on the other side death, that they overlook death, and see it not. 2. The power of death is so broken as that though there is no remedy but they must see death, yet they shall not see death for ever, shall not be always shut up under its arrests, the day will come when death shall be swallowed up in victory. 3. They are perfectly delivered from eternal death, shall not be hurt of the second death. That is the death especially meant here, that death which is for ever, which is opposed to everlasting life, this they shall never see, for they shall never come into condemnation; they shall have their everlasting lot where there will be no more death, where they cannot die any more, *Luke xx. 36.* Though now they cannot avoid seeing death, and tasting it too, yet they shall shortly be there where it will be seen no more for ever, *Exod. xiv. 13.*

Secondly, The Jews cavil at this doctrine. Instead of laying hold on this precious promise of immortality, which the nature of man has an ambition of; who is there that doth not love life, and dread the sight of death? They lay hold on this occasion to reproach him that makes them so kind an offer. Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead. Observe here,

1. Their railing; now we know that thou hast a devil, that thou art a mad man, thou ravest, and sayest thou knowest not what. See how these swine trample under foot the precious pearls of gospel promises. If now at last, they had evidence to prove him mad, why did they say, *ver. 48.* before they had that proof, *thou hast a devil?* But this is the method of malice, first to fasten an invidious charge, and then to fish for evidence of it; now we know that thou hast a devil. If he had not abundantly proved himself a teacher come from God, his promises of immortality to his credulous followers might justly have been ridiculed, and charity itself would have imputed them to a crazy fancy, but his doctrine was evidently divine, his miracles confirmed it, and the Jewish religion taught them to expect such a prophet, and to believe in him; for them therefore thus to reject him, was to abandon that promise, to which their twelve tribes hoped to come, *Acts xxvi. 7.*

2. Their reasoning, and the colour they had to run him down thus. In short, they look upon him as guilty of an insufferable piece of arrogance, in making himself greater than Abraham and the prophets. Abraham is dead, and the prophets, they are dead too; very true, by the same token that these Jews were the genuine offspring of those that killed them. Now, 1. It is true that Abraham and the prophets were great men, great in the favour of God, and great in the esteem of all good men. 2. It is true that they kept God's sayings, and were obedient to them; and yet, 3. It is true they died, they never pretended to have, much less to give, immortality, but every one in his own order, was gathered to his people. It was their honour that they died in faith, but die they must. Why should a good man be afraid to die, when Abraham is dead, and the prophets dead? They have tracked the way through that darksome valley, which should reconcile us to death, and help to take off the terror of it. Now they think Christ talks madly, when he saith, *If a man keep my sayings he shall never taste death.* Tasting death means the same thing with seeing it; and well may death be represented as grievous to several of the senses, which is the destruction of them all.

Now their arguing goes upon two mistakes.

1. They understood Christ of an immortality in this world, and that was a mistake. In the sense that Christ spoke, it was not true that Abraham and the prophets were dead, for God is still the God of Abraham, and the God of the holy prophets, *Rev. xxii. 6.* Now God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; therefore Abraham and the prophets are still alive, and as Christ meant it, they had not seen nor tasted death.

2. They thought none could be greater than Abraham and the prophets, whereas they could not but know that the Messiah would be greater than Abraham or any of the prophets, who did virtuously, but he excelled them all; nay, they borrowed their greatness from him. It was the honour of Abraham, that was the Father of the Messiah, and the honour of the prophets, that they testified beforehand concerning him; so that he certainly

tainly obtained a far more excellent name than they. Therefore instead of inferring from Christ's making himself greater than Abraham, that he had a *devil*, they should have inferred from his proving himself so, by doing the works which neither Abraham nor the prophets ever did, that he was the Christ; but their eyes were blinded.

They scornfully asked, *whom makest thou thyself?* As if he had been guilty of pride and vain-glory; whereas he was so far from making himself greater than he was, that he now drew a veil over his own glory, tempted himself, and made himself less than he was, and was the greatest example of humility that ever was.

Thirdly, Christ's reply to this cavil; still he vouchsafes to reason with them, that every mouth may be stopped. No doubt he could have struck them dumb-or dead upon the spot, but this was the *day of his patience*.

1. In his answer he insists not upon his own testimony concerning himself, but waves it as not sufficient or conclusive, *ver. 54. If I honour myself, my honour is nothing, ἡ δὲ ἰσχυρὸς ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ, If I glorify myself.* Note, Self-honour is no honour; and the affectation of glory is both the forfeiture and defeasance of it, it is *not glory*, Prov. xxv. 27. but so great a reproach, that there is no sin which men are more industrious to hide than this; he that most affects praise, yet would not be thought to do it. Honour of our own creating is a mere chimera, has nothing in it, and therefore is called *vain-glory*. Self-admirers are self-deceivers. Our Lord Jesus was not one that honoured himself, as they represented him; he was crowned by him who is the fountain of honour, and glorified not himself to be made a high-priest, *Heb. v. 4, 5.*

2. But he refers himself to his Father, God; and to their father, Abraham.

1. To his Father, God, *It is my Father that honoureth me.* By this he means, (1.) That he derived from his Father all the honour he now claimed; he had commanded them to believe in him, to follow him, and to keep his word, all which put an honour upon him; but it was the Father that laid help upon him, that lodged all fullness in him, that sanctified him, and sealed him, and sent him into the world to receive all the honours due to the Messiah, and this justified him in all these demands of respect. (2.) That he depended upon his Father for all the honour he further looked for; he courted not the applauses of the age, but despised them; for his eye and heart were upon the glory which the Father had promised him, and which he had with the Father before the world was. He aimed at an advancement, with which the Father was to exalt him, a name he was to give him, *Phil. ii. 8, 9.* Note, Christ and all that are his depend upon God for their honour: and he that is sure of honour where he is known, cares not though he be slighted where he is in disguise.

Appealing thus often to his Father, and his Father's testimony of him, which yet the Jews did not admit or give credit to, he here takes occasion to shew,

1. The reason of their incredulity, notwithstanding this testimony, and that was their *unacquaintedness* with God, *q. d.* But why should I talk to you of my Father's honouring me, when he is one you know nothing of? You say of him that he is your God, yet you have not known him. Where observe,

(1.) The profession they made of relation to God. *Ye say he is your God,* the God you have chosen: and are in covenant with: ye say ye are Israel, but all are not so indeed that are of Israel, *Rom. ix. 6.* Note, Many pretend to have an interest in God, and say he is theirs, who yet have no just cause to say so. They who called themselves the temple of the Lord, having profaned the excellency of Jacob, did but trust in lying words. What will it avail us to say he is our God, if we be not in sincerity his people, nor such as he will own?

Christ mentions here their profession of relation to God, as that which was an aggravation of their unbelief. All people will honour those whom their God honours; but these Jews who said that the Lord was their God, yet studied how to put the utmost disgrace upon one whom their God put honour upon. Note, The profession we make of a covenant-relation to God, and an interest in him, if it be not improved by us, will be improved against us.

(2.) Their ignorance of him, and estrangement from him, notwithstanding this profession. *Yet ye have not known him.* 1. *Ye know him not at all.* These Pharisees were so taken up with the study of their traditions concerning things foreign and trifling, that they never minded the most needful and useful knowledge; like the false prophets of old, who caused people to forget God's name by their dreams, *Jer. xxiii. 27.* Or, 2. *Ye know him not aright,* but mistake concerning him, and that is as bad as not knowing him at all, or worse. Men may be able to dispute subtilty concerning God, and yet may think him such a one as themselves, and not know him. *Ye say he is yours,* and it is natural to us to desire to know our own, yet ye know him not. Note, There are many who claim kindred to God, who yet have no acquaintance with him. It is only the name of God which they have learned to talk of, and to hector with; but for the nature of God, his attributes and perfections, and relations to his creatures, they know nothing of the matter; we speak this to their shame, *1 Cor. xv. 34.* Multitudes satisfy themselves, but deceive themselves with a titular relation to an unknown God.

This Christ chargeth upon the Jews here, (1.) To shew how vain and groundless their pretensions of relation to God were. You say he is yours, but you give yourselves the lye, for it is plain you do not know him; and we reckon a cheat as effectually convicted, if it be found that he is ignorant of the persons he pretends alliance to. (2.) To shew the true reason why they were not wrought upon by Christ's doctrine and miracles. They knew not God, and therefore perceived not the image of God, nor the voice of God in Christ. Note, The reason why men receive not the gospel of Christ is, because they have not the knowledge of God. Men therefore submit not to the righteousness of Christ, because they are ignorant of God's righteousness, *Rom. x. 3.* They that know not God, and obey not the gospel of Christ, are put together, *2 Thess. i. 8.*

2. He gives them the reason of his assurance, that his Father would honour him and own him. But I know him; and again, I know him; which speaks not only his acquaintance with him, having lain in his bosom, but his confidence in him, to stand by him, and bear him out in his whole undertaking; as we prophesied concerning him, *Isa. l. 7, 8. I know that I shall not be ashamed, for he is near that justifies; and as Paul, I know whom I have believed. 2 Tim. i. 12. I know him to be faithful, and powerful, and heartily engaged in the cause which I know to be his own.* Observe,

1. How he professeth his knowledge of his Father with the greatest certainty, as one that was neither afraid, nor ashamed to own it. *If I should say I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you.* He would not deny his relation to God to humour the Jews, and to avoid their reproaches, and prevent further trouble; nor would he retract what he had said; nor confess himself either deceived or a deceiver; if he should, he would be found a false witness against God and himself. Note, They who disown their religion and relation to God, as Peter, are liars, as much as hypocrites are who pretend to know him when they do not. See *1 Tim. vi. 13, 14.* Mr. Clarke observes well upon this, that it is a great sin to deny God's grace in us.

2. How he proves his knowledge of his Father, *I know him, and keep his sayings, or his word.* Christ, as a man was obedient to the moral law; and as a Redeemer, to the mediatorial law, and in both he kept his Father's word, and his own word with the Father. Christ requires of us, *ver. 51. that we keep his sayings;* and he hath set before us a copy of obedience, a copy without a blot, he kept his Father's sayings; well might he who learned obedience teach it; see *Heb. v. 8, 9.* Christ, by this evidenceth that he knew the Father. Note, The best proof of our acquaintance with God is our obedience to him. Those only know God aright that keep his word; it is a ruled case, *1 John ii. 3. Hereby we know that we know him (and do not only fancy it) if we keep his commandments.*

2. Christ refers them to their father whom they boasted so much of a relation to, and that was Abraham, and this closeth the discourse.

1. Christ asserts Abraham's prospect of him, and respect to him, *ver. 56. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.* And by this he proves that he was not at all out of the way, when he made himself greater than Abraham.

Two things he here speaks of as instances of that patriarch's respect to the promised Messiah.

1. The ambition he had to see his day, he rejoiced, *ἡγαλλίασθαι, he leaped at it.* The word, though it commonly signifies rejoicing, yet here must signify rather a transport of desire than of joy, for otherwise the latter part of the verse would be a tautology, he saw it and was glad: he reached out, or stretched himself forth, that he might see my day; as Zaccheus, that ran before and climbed the tree to see Jesus. The notices he had received of the Messiah to come, had raised in him an expectation of something great, which he earnestly longed to know more of. The dark intimation of that which is considerable, put smen upon enquiry, and makes them earnestly ask who? and what? and where? and when? and how? And thus the prophets of the Old Testament having a general idea of a grace that should come searched diligently, *1 Pet. i. 10.* and Abraham was as industrious herein as any of them. God told him of a land that he would give his posterity, and of the wealth and honour he designed them, *Gen. xv. 14.* but he never leaped thus to see that day, as he did to see the day of the Son of man. He could not look with so much indifferency upon the promised seed, as he did upon the promised land, in that he was, but to the other he could not be contentedly a stranger. Note, Those who rightly know any thing of Christ, cannot but be earnestly desirous to know more of him. Those who discern the dawning of the light of the Sun of righteousness, cannot but wish to see his rising. The mystery of redemption is that which angels desire to look into, much more should we that are more immediately concerned in it. Abraham desired to see Christ's day, though it was at a great distance, but this degenerate seed of his discerned not his day, nor bid it welcome when it came. The appearing of Christ, which gracious souls love and long for, carnal hearts dread and loathe.

2. The satisfaction he had in what he did see of it. *He saw it, and was glad.* Observe here,

1. How God gratified the pious desire of Abraham; he longed to see Christ's day, and he saw it. Though he saw it not so plainly, and fully and distinctly as we now see it under the gospel, yet he saw something of it, more afterwards than he did at first. Note, To him that hath, and to him that asks, shall be given; to him that useth, and improveth what he hath, and that desireth and prayeth for more of the knowledge of Christ, God will give more. But how did Abraham see Christ's day? (1.) Some understand it of the sight he had of it in the other world: The separate soul of Abraham, when the veil of flesh was rent, saw the mysteries of the kingdom of God in heaven. Calvin mentions the sense of it, and doth not much disallow it. Note, The longings of gracious souls after Jesus Christ, will be fully satisfied when they come to heaven, and not till then. But, (2.) It is more commonly understood of some sight he had of Christ's day in this world. They that received not the promises, yet saw them afar off, *Heb. xi. 13.* Balaam saw Christ, but not nigh. There is room to conjecture that Abraham had some vision of Christ and his day for his own private satisfaction, which is not, nor must be, recorded in his story, like that of Daniel's which must be shut up, and sealed unto the time of the end, *Dan. xii. 4.* Christ knew what Abraham saw better than Moses did. But there are divers things recorded, in which Abraham saw more of that which he longed to see, than he did when the promise was first made to him. He saw in Melchisedek, one made like unto the Son of God, and a priest for ever; he saw an appearance of Jehovah, attended with two angels, in the plains of Mamre. In the prevalency of his intercession for Sodom, he saw a specimen of Christ's intercession; in the casting out of Ishmael, and the establishment of the covenant with Isaac, he saw a figure of the gospel-day, which is Christ's day, for these things were in allegory. In offering Isaac, and the ram instead of Isaac, he saw a double type of the great sacrifice; and his calling the place *Jehovah-jireh, it shall be seen,* intimates that he saw something more in it than others did; which time would produce; and in making his servant put his hand under his thigh, when he swore he had a regard to the Messiah.

2. How Abraham entertained these discoveries of Christ's day, and bid them welcome; he saw and was glad. He was glad of what he saw, of God's favour to himself, and glad of what he foresaw of the mercy God had in store for the world. Perhaps this refers to Abraham's laughing when God assured him of a son by Sarah, *Gen. xvii. 16, 17.* for that was not a laughter of distrust as Sarah's, but of joy; in that promise he saw Christ's day, and it filled him with joy unspeakable. Thus he embraced the promises. Note, A believing sight of Christ and his day, will put gladness into the heart, No joy like the joy of faith; we are never acquainted with true pleasure, till we are acquainted with Christ.

2. The Jews cavil at this, and reproach him for it, *ver. 57. Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?* Here, 1. They suppose that if Abraham saw him and his day, he also had seen Abraham, which yet was not a necessary innuendo, but this turn of his words would best serve to expose him; yet it was true that Christ had seen Abraham, and had talked with him as a man talks with his friend. 2. They suppose it a very absurd thing for him to pretend to have seen Abraham, who was dead so many ages before he was born. The state of the dead is an invisible state; but here they run upon the old mistake, understanding that corporally, which Christ spoke spiritually: now this gave them occasion to despise his youth, and to upbraid him with it, as if he were but of yesterday, and knew nothing. *Thou art not yet fifty years old:* They might as well have said thou art not forty; for he was now about thirty-two or thirty-three years old. As to this, Irenæus, one of the first fathers, with this passage supports the tradition, which he saith he had from some that had conversed with St John, that our Saviour lived to be fifty years old, which he contends for, *Advers. Hæres. lib. 2. cap. 39, 40.* See what a little credit is to be given to tradition; and as to this here the Jews spoke at random; some year they would mention, and therefore pitched upon one that they thought he was far enough short of; he did not look to be forty, but they were sure he could not be fifty, much less cotemporary with Abraham. Old age is reckoned to begin at fifty, *Numb. iv. 27.* so that they mean no more, but thou art not to be reckoned

reckoned an old man, many of us are much thy seniors, and yet pretend not to have seen Abraham. Some think that his countenance was so altered with grief and watching, that together with the gravity of his aspect, it made him look like a man of fifty years old: *His visage was so marred*, Isa. lii. 14.

3. Our Saviour gives an effectual answer to this cavil, by a solemn asserting of his own seniority, even to Abraham himself, *ver. 58. Verily, verily, I say unto you; I do not only say it in private to my own disciples, who will be sure to say, as I say, but to you my enemies and persecutors: I say it to your faces take it how you will, Before Abraham was, I am; ἔγωγε ἄρα ὤντων ἱστῶμαι.* Before Abraham was made, or born, I am. The change of the word is observable, and speaks Abraham a creature, and himself the Creator: well therefore might he make himself greater than Abraham; *Before Abraham he was*, (1.) As God. *I am* is the name of God, *Exod. iii. 14.* it speaks its self-existence; he doth not say *I was*, but *I am*, for he is the first and the last, immutably the same, *Rev. i. 8.* thus he was not only before Abraham, but before *all worlds*, *Prov. viii. 23.* John i. 1. (2.) As Mediator. He was the appointed Messiah long before Abraham: the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, *Rev. xiii. 8.* the channel of conveyance of light, life, and love from God to man. This supposeth his divine nature, that he is the same in himself from eternity, *Ileb. xiii. 8.* and adds, that he is the same to man ever since the fall: he was made of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption to Adam, and Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and Shem, and all the patriarchs that lived and died by faith in him before Abraham was born. Abraham was the root of the Jewish nation, the rock out of which they were hewn. If Christ was before Abraham, his doctrine and religion was no novelty, but was in the substance of it prior to Judaism, and ought to take place of it.

4. This great word ended the dispute abruptly, and put a period to it: they could bear to hear no more from him, and he needed to say no more to them, having witnessed this good confession, which was sufficient to support all his claims. One would think Christ's discourse, in which shone so much both of grace and glory, should have captivated them all; but their inveterate prejudice against the holy, spiritual doctrine, and law of Christ, which were so contrary to their pride and worldliness, baffled all the methods of conviction. Now was fulfilled that prophecy, *Mal. iii. 1, 2.* That when the messengers of the covenant should come to his temple, they would not abide the day of his coming, because he would be like a refiner's fire. Observe here,

1. How they were enraged at Christ for what he said: *They took up stones to cast at him*, *ver. 59.* Perhaps they looked upon him as a blasphemer, and such were indeed to be stoned, *Lev. xxiv. 16.* but they must be first legally tried and convicted: farewell justice and order, if every man pretend to execute a law at his pleasure: Besides they had said but just now, that he was a distracted, crack-brained man, and if so, it was against all reason and equity to punish him as a malefactor for what he said. *They took up stones.* Dr. Lightfoot will tell you how they came to have stones so ready in the temple; they had workmen at this time repairing the temple, or making some additions, and the pieces of stone which they hewed off served for this purpose. See here the desperate power of sin and Satan in and over the children of disobedience. Who would think that ever there should be such wickedness as this in men? Such an open and daring rebellion against one that undeniably proved himself to be the Son of God: thus every one has a stone to throw at his holy religion, *Acts xxviii. 22.*

2. How he made his escape out of their hands.

1. He absconded; *Jesus hid himself*, *εποσθη*, he was hid, either by the crowd of those which wished well to him, to shelter him; he that ought to have been upon a throne, high, and lifted up, is content to be lost in a crowd: or perhaps he concealed himself behind some of the walls or pillars of the temple; *In the secret of his tabernacle he shall hide me*, *Psal. xxvii. 5.* or by a divine power, casting a mist before their eyes, he made himself invisible to them. *When the wicked rise, a man is hidden*, a wise and good man, *Prov. xxviii. 12—23.* Not that Christ was afraid, or ashamed to stand by what he had said, but his hour was not yet come, and he would countenance the flight of his ministers and people in times of persecution, when they are called to it. The Lord hid Jeremiah and Baruch, *Jer. xxxvi. 26.*

2. He departed, he went out of the temple, going through the midst of them undiscovered, and so passed by. This was not a cowardly, inglorious flight, not such as argued either guilt or fear. It was foretold concerning him, that he should not fail nor be discouraged, *Isa. xliii. 4.* But, 1. It was an instance of his power over his enemies, and that they could do no more against him than he gave them leave to do; by which it appears, that when afterwards he was taken in their pits, he offered himself, *John x. 18.* They now thought they had him sure, and yet he passed through the midst of them, either their eyes blinded, or their hands tied, and thus he left them to vex like a lion disappointed of his prey. 2. It was an instance of his prudent provision for his own safety, when he knew his work was not done, nor his testimony finished: thus he gave an example to his own rule, *when they persecute you in one city, flee to another; nay if occasion be to a wilderness*, for so Elijah did, *1 Kings xiv. 3, 4.* and the woman the church, *Rev. xii. 6.* When they took up loose stones to throw at Christ, he could have commanded the fixed stones which did cry out of the wall against them to avenge his cause, or the earth to open and swallow them up: but he chose to accommodate himself to the state he was in, to make the example imitable by the prudence of his followers, without a miracle. 3. It was a righteous deserting of those, that (worse than the Gadarenes, who prayed him to depart) stoned him from among them. Christ will not long stay with those that bid him be gone. Christ did again visit the temple after this, as one *loth to depart* he bid off farewell, but at last he abandoned it for ever, and left it desolate. Christ now went through the midst of the Jews, and none of them courted his stay, or stirred up themselves to take hold on him, but were even content to let him go. Note, God never forsakes any till they have first provoked him to withdraw, and will have none of him. Calvin observes that the chief priests, when they had driven Christ out of the temple, valued themselves by the possession they kept of it: but (saith he) those deceive themselves that are proud of a church or temple which Christ has forsaken: *Longe falluntur, cum templum se habere putant Deo vacuum.* When Christ left them, it is said he passed by silently and unobserved; *ἀπαρρηστος*, so that they were not aware of him. Note, Christ's departures from a church, or a particular soul are often secret, and not soon taken notice of. As the kingdom of God comes not, so it goes not with observation. See *Judg. xvi. 20.* Samson wist not that the Lord was departed from him. Thus it was with these forsaken Jews, God left them, and they never missed him.

C H A P. IX.

After Christ's departure out of the temple, in the close of the foregoing chapter, and before this happened, which is recorded in the chapter, he had been for some time abroad in the country: it is supposed about two or three months, in which interval of time Dr. Lightfoot and other

harmonists place all the passages that occur from Luke x. 17. to Luke xiii. 17. What is recorded John vii. and viii. was at the feast of tabernacles in September; what is recorded in this and the following chapter, was at the feast of dedication in December, chap. x. 22. Mr. Clarke and others place this immediately after the foregoing chapter. In this chapter we have, (1.) the miraculous cure of a man that was born blind, *ver. 1—7.* (2.) The discourses which were occasioned by it. (1.) A discourse of the neighbours among themselves, and with the man, *ver. 8—12.* (2.) Between the Pharisees and the man, *ver. 13—34.* (3.) Between Christ and the poor man, *ver. 35—38.* (4.) Between Christ and the Pharisees, *ver. 39. ad finem.*

1. AND as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth, 2. And his disciples asked him, saying master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? 3. Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. 4. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work. 5. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. 6. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. 7. And said unto him, Go wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation Sent.) He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

We have here sight given to a poor beggar that had been blind from his birth. Observe,

First the notice which our Lord Jesus took of the piteous case of this poor blind man; *ver. 1. As Jesus passed by he saw a man which was blind from his birth.* The first words seem to refer to the last of the foregoing chapter, and countenance their opinion, who in the harmony place this story immediately after that. There it was said, *επαρρηστος*, he passed by, and here without so much as repeating his name, (though our translators supply it.) *καὶ παρὰ τὸν δρόμον*, and as he passed by. (1.) Though the Jews had so basely abused him, and both by word and deed gave him the highest provocation imaginable, yet he did not let slip any opportunity of doing good among them, nor take up a resolution, as justly he might have done, never to have favoured them with any good offices. The cure of this blind man was a kindness to the public, enabling him to work for his living, who before was a charge and a burden to the neighbourhood. It is noble and generous, and Christ-like to be willing to serve the public, even when we are slighted and disobliged by it, or think ourselves so. (2.) Though he was in his flight from a threatening danger, and escaped for his life, yet he willingly halted and staid awhile to shew mercy to this poor man. We make more haste than good speed when we out-run opportunities of doing good. (3.) When the Pharisees drove Christ from them, he went to this poor blind beggar. Some of the ancients make this a figure of the bringing of the gospel to the Gentiles, who sat in darkness, when the Jews had rejected it, and driven it from them. (4.) Christ took this poor blind man in his way, and cured him in transitu as he passed by. Thus should we take occasions of doing good, even as we pass by, wherever we are.

Now, 1. The condition of this poor man was very sad; he was blind, and had been so from his birth. If the light is sweet how melancholy must it needs be for a man, all his days, to eat in darkness? He that is blind has no enjoyment of the light, but he that is born blind, has no idea of it: Methinks such a one would give a great deal to have his curiosity satisfied with but one day's sight of light and colours, shapes and figures, though he were never to see them more. Why is the light of life given to one that is in this misery, that is deprived of the light of the sun: whose way is thus hid, and whom God hath thus hedged in? *Job iii. 20—23.* Let us bless God that it was not our case. The eye is one of the most curious parts of the body, its structure exceeding nice and fine. In the formation of animals, it is said to be the first part that appears distinctly discernible. What a mercy is it that there was no miscarriage in the making of ours. Christ cured many that were blind by disease or accident, but here he cured one that was born blind. (1.) That he might give an instance of his power to help in the most desperate cases, and to relieve when none else can. (2.) That he might give a specimen of the work of his grace upon the souls of sinners, which gives sight to those that were by nature blind.

2. The compassions of our Lord Jesus towards him were very tender. He saw him, i. e. he took cognisance of his case, and looked upon him with concern. When God is about to work deliverance, he is said to see the affliction; so Christ saw this poor man. Others saw him, but not as he did. This poor man could not see Christ, but Christ saw him, and anticipated both his prayers and expectations with a surprising cure. Christ is often found of those that seek him not, nor see him, *Isa. lxxv. 1.* And if we know or apprehend any thing of Christ, it is because we were first known of him, *Gal. iv. 9.* and apprehended by him, *Phil. iii. 12.*

Secondly, The discourse between Christ and his disciples concerning this man. When he departed out of the temple, they went along with him, for those were they that continued with him in his temptations, and followed him whithersoever he went: and they lost nothing by their adherence to him, but gained experience abundantly. Observe,

1. The question which the disciples put to their Master upon this blind man's case, *ver. 2.* When Christ looked upon him, they had an eye to him too: Christ's compassions should kindle ours. It is probable Christ told them that this poor man was born blind, or they knew it by common fame; but they did not move Christ to heal him, instead of that they started a very odd question concerning him, *Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?* Now this question of theirs was, 1. Uncharitably censorious. They take it for granted, that this extraordinary calamity was the punishment of some extraordinary uncommon wickedness; and this man was a sinner above all men that dwelt at Jerusalem, *Luke xiii. 14.* For the barbarous people, to infer surely this man is a murderer, was not so strange, but it was inexcusable in them that knew the scriptures, who had read that *all things come alike to all*, and know how it was adjudged in Job's case, that the greatest sufferers are not therefore to be looked upon as the greatest sinners. The grace of repentance calls our own afflictions punishments, but the grace of charity calls the afflictions of others trials unless the contrary is very evident. 2. It was unnecessarily curious. Concluding this calamity to be inflicted for some very heinous crime, they ask who were the criminals, *this man or his parents.* And what was this to them? Or what good would it do them to know it; we are apt to be more inquisitive concerning other people's sins than concerning our own; whereas it is more our concern to know

know wherefore God contends with us, than wherefore he contends with others; for to judge *ourselves* is our duty, but to judge *our brother* is our sin.

They enquire, (1.) Whether this man was punished thus for some sin of his own, either committed or foreseen before his birth. Some think the disciples were tainted with the Pythagorean notion of the *pre-existence* of souls, and their *transmigration* from one body to another. Was this man's soul condemned to the dungeon of this blind body, to punish it for some great sin committed in another body which it had before animated? The Pharisees seem to have had the same opinion of his case, when they said, *thou wast altogether born in sin*, ver. 34. as if all those, and those only were born in sin whom nature had *stigmatized*. Or, (2.) Whether he was punished for the wickedness of his parents, which God sometimes *visits upon the children*. It is a good reason why parents should take heed of sin, lest their children smart for them when they are gone. Let not us thus be cruel to our own, as the *ostrich in the wilderness*. Perhaps the disciples asked this, not as believing that this was the punishment of some actual sin of his own, or his parents, but Christ having intimated to another patient that his impotency was the cause of his sin, *John v. 14*. Master, say they, whose sin is the cause of this impotency? Being at a loss what construction to put upon this providence, they desired to be informed. The equity of God's dispensations is always *certain*, for *his righteousness is as the great mountains*, but not always to be *accounted for*, for his judgments are a *great deep*.

2. Christ's answer to this question. He was always *apt to teach* and to rectify his disciples mistakes.

1. He gives the reason of this poor man's blindness, *neither has this man sinned, nor his parents*; but therefore he was born blind, and hath continued so to this day, that now at last *the works of God should be made manifest in him*, ver. 3. Here Christ, who perfectly knew the secret springs of the divine counsels, has told two things concerning such uncommon calamities.

1. That they are not always inflicted as punishments of sin. The sinfulness of the whole race of mankind doth indeed justify God in all the miseries of human life; so that they who have the least share of them, must say that *God is kind*; and they who have the largest share, must not say he is *unjust*; but many are made much more *miserable* than others in this life, who are not at all more *sinful*. Not but that this man was a sinner, and his parents sinners, but it was not any uncommon guilt that God had an eye to in inflicting this upon him. Note, We must take heed of judging any to be great sinners, merely because they are great sufferers, lest we be found not only *persecuting those whom God has smitten*, *Psal. lxxix. 26*. but *accusing those whom he hath justified*, and *condemning those for whom Christ died*, which is daring and dangerous, *Rom. viii. 33, 34*.

2. That they are sometimes intended purely for the glory of God, and the manifesting of his works. God has a sovereignty over all his creatures and a propriety in them, and may make them serviceable to his glory in such a way as he thinks fit, in doing or suffering; and if God be glorified, either by us or in us, we were not made in vain.

This man was born blind, and it was worth while for him to be so, and to continue thus long dark, *that the works of God might be manifest in him*. That is, (1.) That the attributes of God might be manifested in him. His justice in making sinful men liable to such grievous calamities; his ordinary power and goodness in supporting a poor man under such a grievous and tedious affliction; especially, that his extraordinary power and goodness might be manifested in curing him. Note, The difficulties of providence, otherwise unaccountable, may be resolved into this, God intends in them to *show himself*, to declare his glory, to make himself to be taken notice of. Those who regard him not in the ordinary course of things, are sometimes alarmed by things extraordinary. How contentedly then may a good man be a *loser in his comforts*, while he is sure that thereby God will be one way or other a *gainer in his glory*? (2.) That the counsels of God concerning the Redeemer might be manifested in him. He was born blind, that our Lord Jesus might have the honour of curing him, and might therein prove himself sent of God to be the light of the world. Thus the fall of man was permitted, and the blindness that followed it, that the works of God might be manifested in opening the eyes of the blind. It was now a great while since this man was born blind, and yet it never appeared till now why he was so. Note, The intentions of providence commonly do not appear till a great while after the event, perhaps many years after. The sentences in the book of providence are sometimes long, which you must read a great way before you can apprehend the sense of.

2. He gives the reason of his own forwardness and readiness to help and heal him, ver. 4, 5. It was not for ostentation, but in pursuance of his undertaking. *I must work the works of him that sent me* (of which this is one) *while it is day*, and working time, *the night cometh*, the period of that day, *when no man can work*. This is not only a reason why Christ was constant in doing good to the souls and bodies of men, but why particularly he did this, though it was the sabbath-day, on which works of necessity might be done; and he proves this to be a work of necessity.

1. It was his Father's will; *I must work the works of him that sent me*. Note, (1.) The Father, when he sent his Son into the world, gave him work to do; he did not come into the world to take state, but to do business; whom God sends he employs, for he sends none to be idle. (2.) The works Christ had to do were the works of him that sent him, not only appointed by him, but done for him: he was a worker together with God. (3.) He was pleased to lay himself under the strongest obligations to do the business he was sent about. *I must work*. He engaged his heart in the covenant of redemption, to draw near, and approach to God as Mediator, *Jer. xxx. 21*. Shall we be willing to be loose, when Christ was willing to be bound? (4.) Christ having laid himself under obligations to do his work, laid out himself with the utmost vigour and industry in his work. *He worked the works* he had to do; did *every work* made a business of that which was his business. It is not enough to look at our work and talk over it, but we must work it.

2. Now was his opportunity. *I must work while it is day*; while the time lasts, which is appointed to work in, and while the night lasts, which is given to work by. Christ himself had his day. (1.) All the business of the mediatorial kingdom was to be done within the limits of time, and in this world, for at the end of the world when time shall be no more, the kingdom shall be delivered up to God, even the Father, and the mystery of God finished. (2.) All the work he had to do in his own person here on earth was to be done before his death; the time of his living in this world, is the day here spoken of. Note, The time of our life is our day, in which it concerns us to do the work of the day. Day-time is the proper season for work, *Psal. civ. 22, 23*. during the day of life we must be busy, not waste day-time, nor play by day-light, it will be time enough to rest when our day is done, for it is but a day.

3. The period of his opportunity was at hand, and therefore he would be busy. *The night comes, when no man can work*. Note, The consideration of our death approaching, should quicken us to improve all the opportunities of life, both for doing and getting good. *The night comes* it will come certainly, may come suddenly, is coming nearer and nearer. We

cannot compute how high our sun is, it may go down at noon; nor can we promise ourselves a twilight, between the day of life and the night of death. When the night comes we cannot work, because the light afforded us to work by is *extinguished*; the grave is a land of darkness, and our work cannot be done in the dark. And besides our time allotted us for our work will then be expired; when our Master tied us to duty, he tied us to time too; when night comes, *call the labourers*; we must then *show our work*, and receive according to the things done. In the world of retribution we are no longer probationers; it is too late to bid, when the inch of candle is *dropt*. Christ useth this as an argument with himself to be diligent, though he had no opposition from within to struggle with, much more need have we to work upon our hearts these and the like considerations to quicken us.

4. His business in the world was to enlighten it, ver. 5. *As long as I am in the world*, and that will not be long, *I am the light of the world*. He had said this before, *chap. viii. 12*. He is the *sun of righteousness*, that has not only light in his wings for those that can see, but *healing in his wings*, or *beams*, for those that are blind and cannot see, therein far exceeding in virtue that great light which *rules by day*. Christ would therefore cure this blind man, the representative of a blind world, because he came to be the *light of the world*, not only to give light, but to give sight. Now this gives us, (1.) A great encouragement to come to him, as a guiding, quickening, refreshing light. To whom should we look but to him? Which way should we turn our eyes, but to the light? We partake of the sun's light, and so we may of Christ's grace without money, and without price. (2.) A good example of usefulness in the world. What Christ saith of himself he saith of his disciples, *Ye are lights in the world*, and if so, *Let your light shine*. What were candles made for but to burn?

Thirdly, The manner of the cure of the blind man, ver. 6, 7. The circumstances of the miracle are singular, and no doubt significant. When he had thus spoken for the instruction of his disciples, and the opening of their understandings, then he addressed himself to the opening of the blind man's eyes. He did not defer it till he could do it either more privately for his greater safety, or more publicly for his greater honour, or till the sabbath was past, when it would give less offence; what good we have opportunity of doing, we should do it quickly; he that will never do a good work till there is nothing to be objected against it, will leave many a good work for ever undone. *Ecc. xi. 4*. In the cure observe,

1. The preparation of the eye salve. Christ *spit on the ground*, and made clay of the spittle. He could have cured him with a word, as he did others, but he chose to do it this way, to shew that he is not tied to any method. He made clay of his own spittle, because there was no water near; and he would teach us not to be nice or curious, but what we have at any time occasion to use, to be willing to take up with that which is next hand, if it will but be made to serve the turn. Why should we go about for that which may as well be had and done a nearer way? Christ's making use of his own spittle intimates that there is healing virtue in every thing that belongs to Christ, clay made with Christ's spittle was much more precious than the balm of Gilead.

2. The application of it to the place; *He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay*. Or, as the margin reads it, *He spread (or daubed) the clay upon the eyes of the blind man*, like a tender physician, he did it himself, with his own hand, though the patient was a beggar. Now Christ did this, (1.) To magnify his power in making a blind man to see by that method, which one would think more likely to make a seeing man blind. Daubing clay on the eyes would close them up, but never open them. Note, The power of God often works by contraries; and he makes men feel their own blindness before he gives them sight. (2.) To give an intimation that it was his mighty hand, the very same that at first made man out of the clay, for by him God made the worlds, both the great world, and man the little world. Man was formed out of the clay, and moulded like the clay, and here Christ used the same materials to give sight to the body, that at first he used to give being to it. (3.) To represent and typify the healing and opening the eyes of the mind by the grace of Jesus Christ. The design of the gospel is to open men's eyes, *Acts xxvi. 18*. Now the eye-salve that doth the work is of Christ's preparing, it is made up not as this, of his spittle, but of his blood, the blood and water that came out of his pierced side, we must come to Christ for the eye-salve, *Rev. iii. 18*. He only is able, and he only appointed to make it up, *Luke iii. 18*. The means used in this work are very weak and unlikely, and are made effectual only by the power of Christ, when a dark world was to be enlightened, and nations of blind souls to have their eyes opened, God chose the foolish things and weak, and despised, for the doing of it. And the method Christ takes is, first to make men feel themselves blind, as this poor man did whose eyes were daubed with clay, and then to give them sight. Paul in his conversion was struck blind for three days, and then the scales fell from his eyes. The way prescribed for getting spiritual wisdom is, let a man become a fool that he may be wise; *1 Cor. iii. 18*. We must be made uneasy with our blindness as this man here, and then healed.

3. The directions given to the patient, ver. 7. His physician said to him, *Go, wash in the pool of Siloam*. Not that this washing was needful to effect the cure; but, (1.) Christ would hereby try his obedience; and whether he could with an implicit faith obey the orders of one he was so much a stranger to. (2.) He would likewise try how he stood affected to the tradition of the elders, which taught, and perhaps had taught him (for many that are blind are very knowing) that it was not lawful to wash the eyes, no not with spittles medicinally on the sabbath-day, much less to go to a pool of water to wash them. (3.) He would hereby represent the method of spiritual healing, in which, though the effect is owing purely to his power and grace, yet there is duty to be done by us. Go search the scriptures, attend upon the ministry, converse with the wise, this is like *washing in the pool of Siloam*. Promised graces must be expected in the way of instituted ordinances. The waters of baptism were to them who had been trained up in darkness, like the pool of Siloam, in which they might not only wash and be clean but wash and have their eyes opened. Hence they that were baptized, are said to be *born again, enlightened*; and the antients called baptism *παράκλησις, illumination*.

Concerning the pool of Siloam, observe, (1.) That it was supplied with water from mount Zion, so that these were the waters of the sanctuary, *Psal. xlv. 4*. living waters which were healing, *Ezek. xlvii. 9*. (2.) That the waters of Siloam had of old signified the throne and kingdom of the house of David, pointing at the Messiah, *Isa. viii. 6*. and the Jews who refused the waters of Shiloah, Christ's doctrine and law, and rejoiced in the tradition of the elders. Christ would try this man whether he would cleave to the waters of Siloam or no. (3.) The evangelist takes notice of the signification of the name, its being interpreted sent; Christ is often called the *sent of God*; the messenger of the covenant, *Mal. iii. 1*. So that when Christ sent him to the pool of Siloam, he did in effect send him to himself, for Christ is all in all, to the healing of souls. Christ as a prophet directs us to himself as a priest, *Go, wash in the fountain opened*, a fountain of life, not a pool.

4. The patient's obedience to these directions: *He went his way therefore*, probably led by some friend or other; or perhaps he was so well acquainted with Jerusalem, that he could find the way himself, nature often sup-

supplies the want of sight with an uncommon sagacity; and he washed his eyes, probably the disciples or some stander by informed him, that he who bid him do it, was that Jesus whom he had so much heard of, else he would not have gone at his bidding, on that which looked so like a fool's errand; in confidence of Christ's power as well as in obedience to his command, he went and washed.

5. The cure effected, *he came seeing*. There is more glory in this concise narrative, *he went and washed, and came seeing*, than in Caesar's *Veni vidi vici*. When the clay was washed off from his eyes, all the other impediments were done away with it: so when the pangs and struggles of the new birth are over, and the pains and terrors of conviction past, the bands of sin fly off with them, and a glorious light and liberty succeed. See here an instance, 1. Of the power of Christ. What cannot he do, who could not only do this, but do it thus? with a lump of clay laid on either eye, and washed off again, he couched those cataracts immediately, which the most skilful oculist with the finest instrument and the most curious hand could not remove. No doubt this is *he that should come*, for by him the blind receive their sight. 2. It is an instance of the virtue of faith and obedience. This man let Christ do what he pleased, and did what he appointed him to do, and so was cured. They that would be healed by Christ, must be ruled by him. He came back from the pool to his neighbours and acquaintance, wondering; and wondering at, he came seeing. This represents the benefit gracious souls find in attending on instituted ordinances, according to Christ's appointment; they have gone to the pool of Siloam weak, and have come away strengthened, have gone doubting, and come away satisfied; have gone mourning, and come away rejoicing; gone trembling, and come away triumphing; have gone blind, and come away seeing; come away singing, *Isa. lii. 8*.

8. ¶ The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? 9. Some said this is he: others said, He is like him: but he said I am he. 10. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? 11. He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash; and I went and washed, and I received sight. 12. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said I know not.

Such a wonderful event as the giving of sight to a man born blind, could not but be the talk of the town, and many heeded it no more than they do other town talk, that is but nine days wonder; but here we are told what the neighbours said of it, for the confirmation of the matter of fact. That which at first was not believed without scrutiny, may afterwards be admitted without scruple.

Two things are debated in this conference about it.

First, Whether this was the same man that had before been blind, *ver. 8*. The neighbours that lived near the place where he was born and bred, and knew that he had been blind, could not but be amazed when they saw that he had his eye-sight, had it on a sudden and perfectly; and they said, *Is this not he that sat and begged?* It seems this blind man was a common beggar, being disabled to work for his living; and so discharged from the obligation of the law, *that if any would not work, neither should he eat*. When he could not go about, he sat; if we cannot work for God, we must sit still quietly for him. When he could not labour, his parents not being able to maintain him, he begged. Note, Those who cannot otherwise subsist, must not like the unjust steward be ashamed to beg; let no man be ashamed of any thing but sin. There are some common beggars that are objects of charity, that should be distinguished, and we must not let the bees starve for the sake of the drones or wasps that are among them.

As to this man, (1.) It was well ordered by providence, that he on whom this miracle was wrought should be a common beggar, and so generally known and remarkable, by which means the truth of the miracle was the better attested, and there were the more to witness against those infidel Jews who would not believe that he had been blind, than if he had been maintained in his father's house. (2.) It was the greater instance of Christ's condescension, that he seemed (as I may say) to take more pains about the cure of a common beggar than of others. When it was for the advantage of his miracles that they should be wrought on those that were remarkable, he pitched upon those that were made so by their poverty and misery, not by their dignity.

In answer to this enquiry, (1.) Some said, *This is he*, the very same man, and these are witnesses to the truth of the miracle, for they had long known him stone blind. (2.) Others who could not think it possible that a man born blind should thus on a sudden receive his sight, for that reason and no other, said, *He is not he, but is like him*, and so by their confession, if it be he, it is a great miracle that is wrought upon him. Hence we may take occasion to think, (1.) Of the wisdom and power of providence in ordering such an universal variety of the faces of men and women, so that no two are so alike, but that they may be distinguished, which is necessary to society and commerce, and the administration of justice. And, (2.) Of the wonderful change which the converting grace of God makes upon some, who before were very wicked and vile, but are thereby so universally and visibly altered, that one would not take them to be the same persons.

This controversy was soon decided by the man himself, *he said I am he*, the very man that so lately sat and begged; I am he that was blind and was an object of the charity of men, but now see, and am a monument of the mercy and grace of God. We do not find that the neighbours appealed to him in this matter, but he hearing the debate interposed, and put an end to it. It is a piece of justice we owe to our neighbours to rectify their mistakes, and to set things before them, as far as we are able, in a true light. Applying it spiritually it teacheth us, That those who are savingly enlightened by the grace of God, should be ready to own what they were before that blessed change was wrought, *1 Tim. i. 13, 14*.

Secondly, How he came to have his eyes opened, *ver. 10, 11, 12*. They will now turn aside and see this great sight, and enquire further concerning it. He did not sound a trumpet when he did these alms, nor perform his cures upon a stage; and yet like a city upon a hill, they could not be hid.

Two things these neighbours enquire after.

1. The manner of the cure. *How were thine eyes opened?* The works of the Lord being great they ought to be sought out, *Psal. cxi. 2*. It is good to observe the way and method of God's works, and they will appear the more wonderful. We may apply it spiritually; it is strange that blind eyes should be opened, but more strange when we consider how they are opened, how weak the means are that are used, and how strong the opposition that is conquered.

In answer to this he gives them a plain and full account of the matter, *ver. 11*. *A man that is called Jesus made clay—and I received sight*. Note, Those who have experienced special instances of God's power and goodness in temporal or spiritual things, should be ready upon all occasions to communicate their experiences for the glory of God and the instruction and encouragement of others. See David's collection of his experiences, his own and others, *Psal. xxxiv. 4, 5, 6*. It is a debt we owe to our benefactor, and to our brethren. God's favours are lost upon us, when they are lost with us, and go no further.

2. Concerning the author of it, *ver. 12*. *Where is he?* Some perhaps asked this question out of curiosity, where is he that we may see him? A man that did such cures as these might well be a shew, which one would go a good way for the sight of. Others perhaps asked out of ill will, where is he, that we may seize him? There was a proclamation out for the discovering and apprehending of him, *John xi. 57*. and the unthinking crowd, in spite of all reason and equity, will have ill thoughts of those that are put into an ill name. Some we hope asked this question out of good will; where is he, that we may be acquainted with him? Where is he, that we may come to him, and share in the favours he is so free of?

In answer to this he could say nothing, *I know not*. As soon as Christ had sent him to the pool of Siloam, it should seem he withdrew immediately, as he did, *chap. v. 1*. and did not stay till the man returned, as if he either doubted of the effect, or waited for the man's thanks. Humble souls take more pleasure in doing good, than in hearing of it again; it will be time enough to hear of it in the resurrection of the just. The man had never seen Jesus, for by that time he had gained his sight he had lost his physician; and he asked, it is probable, *Where is he?* None of all the new and surprising objects that presented themselves could be so grateful to him as one sight of Christ, but as yet he knew no more of him, but that he was called, and rightly called Jesus, a Saviour. Thus in the work of grace wrought upon the soul we see the change, but see not the hand that makes it; for the way of the Spirit is like that of the wind, which thou hearest the sound of, but canst not tell whence it comes or whither it goes.

13. ¶ They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. 14. And it was the sabbath-day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. 15. Then again the Pharisees also asked how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. 16. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath-day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. 17. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet. 18. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. 19. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? 20. His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: 21. But by what means he now seeth we know not; or who hath opened his eyes we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. 22. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. 23. Therefore said his parents, he is of age; ask him. 24. Then again called they the man that was blind and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner. 25. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. 26. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? 27. He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples? 28. Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. 29. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. 30. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. 31. Now ye know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God and doeth his will, him he heareth. 32. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. 33. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. 34. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

One would have expected that such a miracle as Christ wrought upon the blind man, should have settled his reputation, and silenced and shamed all opposition, but it had the contrary effect; instead of being embraced as a prophet for it, he is prosecuted as a criminal.

First, Here is the information that was given in to the Pharisees concerning this matter, *ver. 13*. *They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind*. They brought him to the great Sanhedrin, which consisted chiefly of Pharisees, as least the Pharisees in the Sanhedrin were most active against Christ.

1. Some think they that brought this man to the Pharisees, did it with a good design, to shew them that this Jesus whom they prosecuted, was not what they represented him, but really a great man, and one that gave considerable

able proofs of a divine mission. What hath convinced us of the truth and excellency of religion, and hath removed our prejudices against it, we should be forward, as we have opportunity, to offer to others for their conviction.

2. It should seem rather they did it with an *ill design*, to exasperate the Pharisees the more against Christ, and that needed not, for they were bitter enough of themselves. They brought him with such a suggestion as that, *John xi. 47, 48. If ye let him thus alone, all men will believe on him.* Note, Those rulers that are of a persecuting spirit, shall never want ill instruments about them that will blow the coals and make them worse.

Secondly, The ground which was pretended for this information, and the colour given to it. That which was good was never maligned but under the imputation of something evil. And the crime objected here, *ver. 14.* was that, *It was the sabbath-day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.* The profanation of the sabbath-day is certainly an ill thing, and gives a man a very ill character, but the traditions of the Jews had made that to be a violation by the law of the sabbath, which was far from being so. And many a time this matter was contested between Christ and the Jews, that it might be settled for the benefit of the church in all ages. But it may be asked, Why would Christ not only work miracles on the sabbath-day, but work them in such a manner as he knew would give offence to the Jews? When he had healed the impotent man, why should he bid him carry his bed? Could he not have cured this blind man without making clay? I answer, (1.) He would not seem to yield to the usurped power of the Scribes and Pharisees; their government was illegal, their impositions arbitrary, and their zeal for the rituals consumed the substantial of religion, and therefore Christ would not give place to them, *by subjection, no not for an hour.* Christ was made under the law of God, but not under *their law.* 2. He did it that he might both by word and action expound the law of the fourth commandment, and vindicate it from their corrupt glosses, and so teach us both, that a weekly sabbath is to be *perpetually* observed in the church one day in seven, for what need was there to explain that law, if it must be presently abrogated; and that it is not to be *ceremoniously* observed by us, as it was by the Jews? Works of necessity and mercy are allowed, and the sabbath-rest to be kept, not so much for its own sake, as in order to the sabbath-work. 3. Christ chose to work his cures on the sabbath-day, to dignify and sanctify the day, and to intimate that spiritual cures should be wrought mostly on the Christian sabbath-day. How many blind eyes have been opened by the preaching of the gospel, that blessed eye-salve, on the Lord's day; how many impotent souls cured on that day?

Thirdly, The trial and examination of this matter by the Pharisees, *ver. 15.* And here appears so much passion and prejudice, and ill-humour, and so little reason, that the discourse is nothing but crossing questions. One would think when a man in these circumstances was brought before them, they should have been so taken up in admiring the miracle, and congratulating the happiness of the poor man, that they could not have been peevish with him: but their enmity to Christ had divested them of all manner of humanity, and divinity too. Let us see how they teased this man.

1. They interrogated him concerning the cure itself.

(1.) They doubted whether he had indeed been *born blind*, and demanded proof of that, which even the prosecutors had acknowledged, *ver. 18.* They did not believe, i. e. they would not, that he was *born blind*. Men that seek occasion to quarrel with the clearest truths may find it if they please; and they that resolve to hold fast deceit, will never want a handle to hold it by. This was not a prudent caution, but a prejudiced infidelity. However, it was a good way they took for the clearing of this, they called the parents of the man that had received his sight. This they did in hopes to disprove the miracle. These parents were poor and timorous, and if they had said they could not be sure this was their son; and that it was only some weakness or dimness in his sight that he had been born with, which if they had been able to get help for him, might have been cured long since; or had otherwise prevaricated for fear of the court, the Pharisees had gained their point and robbed Christ of the honour of this miracle, which would have lessened the reputation of all the rest: but God so ordered and over-ruled this counsel of theirs, that it turned to the more effectual proof of the miracle, and left them under a necessity of being either convinced or confounded.

Now in this part of the examination we have.

1. The questions that were put to them. *Ver. 19.* They ask them in an imperious threatening way, *Is this your son? Dare you swear it? Do you say he was born blind? Are you sure of it? Or did he but pretend to be so, to have an excuse for his begging? How then doth he now see? That is impossible, and therefore you had better unsay it.* Those who cannot bear the light of truth, do all they can to eclipse it, and hinder the discovery of it. Thus the managers of evidence, or mismanagers rather, lead witnesses out of the way, and teach them how to conceal or disguise the truth, and so involve themselves in a double guilt, like that of Jeroboam, who sinned, and made Israel to sin.

2. Their answer to these interrogatories, in which,

1. They fully attest that which they could safely say in this matter; safely, i. e. upon their own knowledge, and safely, i. e. without running themselves into a *peramunire*; *ver. 20.* We know that this is our son, for they were daily conversant with him, and had such a natural affection to him as the true mother had, *1 Kings iii. 26.* which made them know it was their own, and we know that he was *born blind*. They had reason to know it, by the same token that it had cost them many a sad thought, and many a careful, troublesome hour about him. How often had they looked upon him with grief, and lamented their child's blindness, more than all the burdens and inconveniences of their poverty, and wished he had never been born, rather than be born to such an uncomfortable life. Those who are ashamed of their children, or any of their relations, because of their bodily infirmities, may take a reproof from these parents, who freely owned, this is our son, though he was *born blind*, and lived upon alms.

2. They cautiously decline giving any evidence concerning his cure; partly because they were not themselves eye-witnesses of it, and could say nothing to it of their own knowledge; and partly because they found it was a tender point, and would not bear to be meddled with. And therefore having owned that he was their son and was *born blind*, further these deponents say not.

1. Observe how warily they express themselves, *ver. 21.* By what means he now sees, we know not, or who has opened his eyes, we know not, otherwise than by hear-say; can give no account, either by what means or by whose hand it was done. See how the wisdom of this world teacheth men to trim the matter in a critical juncture. Christ was accused as a sabbath-breaker and as an impostor. Now these parents of the blind man, though they were not eye-witnesses of the cure, yet were fully assured of it, and were bound in gratitude to have borne their testimony to the honour of the Lord Jesus, who had done their son so great a kindness; but they had not courage to do it, and then thought it might serve to atone for their not appearing in favour of him; that they said nothing to his prejudice; whereas in the day

of trial, he that is not apparently for Christ; is justly looked upon as really against him, *Luke xi. 23. Mark viii. 38.*

That they might not be further urged in this matter, they refer themselves and the court to him, *He is of age, ask him; he shall speak for himself.* This implies, that while children are not of age (while they are infants, such as cannot speak) it is incumbent upon their parents to speak for them, speak to God for them in prayer, speak to the church for them in baptism; but when they are of age, it is fit they should be asked whether they be willing to stand to that which their parents did for them, and let them speak for themselves. This man though he was *born blind*, yet seems to have been of quick understanding above many, which enabled him to speak for himself, better than his friends could speak for him; thus God often by a kind providence makes up in the mind what is wanting in the body, *1 Cor. xii. 23, 24.* His parents turning them over to him, was only to save themselves from trouble and expose him; whereas they that had so great an interest in his mercies, had reason to embark with him in his hazards for the honour of that Jesus who had done so much for them.

2. See the reason why they were so cautious, *ver. 22, 23.* Because they feared the Jews. It was not because they would put an honour upon their son by making him his own advocate, or because they would have the matter cleared by the best hand; but because they would shift trouble off from themselves, as most people are in care to do, no matter on whom they throw it. Near is my friend, and near is my child, and perhaps near is my religion, but nearer is myself. *Proximus egomet mihi.* But Christianity teacheth another lesson, *1 Cor. x. 24. Esth. viii. 6.*

Here is, 1. The law which the Sanhedrin had made. It was agreed and enacted, by their authority, That if any man within their jurisdiction did confess that Jesus was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Observe,

1. The crime designed to be punished, and so prevented by this statute, and that was embracing Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah; and discovering this by an overt-act, which amounted to a confessing of him. They themselves did expect a Messiah, but they could by no means bear to think that this Jesus should be he; nor admit the question whether he were or no, for two reasons. (1.) Because his precepts were all so contrary to their traditional laws. The spiritual worship he prescribed, overthrew their formalities; nor did any thing more effectually destroy their singularity and narrow-spiritedness, than that universal charity which he taught; humility and mortification, repentance and self-denial, were lessons new to them, and sounded harsh and strange in their ears. (2.) Because his promises and appearances were so contrary to their traditional hopes. They expected a Messiah in outward pomp and splendor, that should not only free the nation from the Roman yoke, but advance the grandeur of the Sanhedrin, and make all the members of it princes and peers: and now to hear of a Messiah, whose outward circumstances were all mean and poor; whose first appearance, and principal residence was in Galilee, a despised province; who never made his court to them, nor sought their favour; whose followers were neither sword-men, nor gown-men, nor any men of honour, but contemptible fishermen; who proposed and promised no other redemption but from sin, no other consolation of Israel but what is spiritual and divine, and at the same time bid his followers expect the cross, and count upon persecution. This was such a reproach to all the ideas they had formed, and filled the minds of their people with, such a blow to their power and interest, and such a disappointment to all their hopes, that they could never be reconciled to it, nor so much as to give it a fair or patient hearing, but right or wrong it must be crushed.

2. The penalty to be inflicted for this crime. If any should own himself a disciple of Jesus, he should be deemed, and taken as an apostate from the faith of the Jewish church, and a rebel and traitor against the government of it, and should therefore be put out of the synagogue, as one that had rendered himself unworthy of the honours, and uncapable of the privileges of their church; he should be excommunicated, and expelled the commonwealth of Israel. Nor was this merely an ecclesiastical censure, which a man that made no conscience of their authority might slight, but it was in effect an outlawry, which excluded a man from civil commerce, and deprived him of his liberty and property. Note, 1. Christ's holy religion, from its first rise, has been opposed by penal laws made against the professors of it; as if men's consciences would otherwise naturally embrace it, this unnatural force has been put upon them. 2. The church's artillery, when the command of it has fallen into ill hands, has often been turned against itself, and ecclesiastical censures made to serve a carnal secular interest. It is no new thing to see those cast out of the synagogue that were the greatest beauties and blessings of it, and to hear those that expelled them say, *The Lord be glorified, Isa. lxvi. 5.*

Now of this edict it is said, (1.) That the Jews had agreed it, or conspired it. Their consultation and communion herein, was a perfect conspiracy against the crown and dignity of the Redeemer, against the Lord and his Anointed. (2.) That they had already agreed it. Though he had been but a few months in any public character among them, and one would think in so short a time could not have made them jealous of him, yet thus early were they aware of his growing interest, and already agreed to do their utmost to suppress it. He had lately made his escape out of the temple, and when they saw themselves baffled in their attempts to take him, they presently took this course, to make it penal for any body to own him. Thus unanimous and thus expeditious are the enemies of the church, and their counsels; but he that sits in heaven laughs at them, and has them in derision, and so may we.

2. The influence which this law had upon the parents of the blind man. They declined saying any thing of Christ, and shuffled it off to their son, because they feared the Jews. Christ had incurred the frowns of the government to do their son a kindness, but they would not incur them to do him any honour. Note, The fear of man brings a snare, *Prov. xxix. 25.* and often makes people deny and disown Christ and his truths and ways, and act against their consciences. Well, the parents have thus disentangled themselves, and are discharged from any farther attendance: let us now go on with the examination of the man himself: their doubt whether he was *born blind* was put out of doubt by them; and therefore,

(2.) They enquired of him concerning the manner of the cure, and made their remarks upon it, *ver. 15, 16.*

1. The same question which his neighbours had put to him, now again the Pharisees asked him how he had received his sight? This they enquired, not with any sincere design to find out the truth, by tracing the report to the original, but with a desire to find an occasion against Christ; for if the man should relate the matter fully, they would prove Christ a sabbath-breaker; if he should vary from his former story, they would have some colour to suspect the whole to be a collusion.

2. The same answer, in effect which he had before given to his neighbours, he here repeats to the Pharisees, *He put clay upon mine eyes; and I washed and do see.* He doth not here speak of the making of the clay, for indeed he had not seen it made: That circumstance was not essential, and

might give the Pharisees most occasion against him, and therefore he wares it. In the former account he said, *I washed and received sight*; but lest they should think it was only a glimpse for the present, which a heated imagination might fancy itself to have, he now saith, *I do see*: It is a complete and lasting cure.

3. The remarks made upon this story were very different, and occasioned a debate in the court, *ver. 16*.

1. Some took this occasion to censure and condemn Christ for what he had done. Some of the Pharisees said, *This man is not of God*, as he pretends, *because he keepeth not the sabbath-day*. 1. The doctrine upon which this censure is grounded, is very true, that those are not of God; those pretenders to prophecy not sent of God; those pretenders to saintship not born of God, who do not keep the sabbath-day. They that are of God will keep the commandments of God; and this is his commandment, that we sanctify the sabbath: They that are of God keep up communion with God, and delight to hear from him, and speak to him; and therefore will observe the sabbath, which is a day appointed for intercourse with heaven. The sabbath is called a sign, for the sanctifying of it is a sign of a sanctified heart; and the profaning of it a sign of a profane heart. But, 2. The application of it to our Saviour is very unjust, for he did religiously observe the sabbath-day, and never in any instance violated it: never did otherwise than well on the sabbath-day. He did not keep the sabbath according to the tradition of the elders and the superstitious observances of the Pharisees, but he kept it according to the command of God, and therefore no doubt he was of God, and his miracles proved him to be Lord also of the sabbath-day. Note, Much unrighteous and uncharitable judging is occasioned by men's making the rules of religion more strict than God has made them, and adding their own fancies to God's appointments; as the Jews here, in the case of sabbath-sanctification. We ourselves may forbear such and such things on the sabbath-day, as we find a distraction to us, and we do well, but we must not therefore tie up others to the same strictness: Every thing that we take for a rule of practice, must not presently be made a rule of judgment.

2. Others spoke in his favour, and very pertinently urged, *How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles*? It seems even in this counsel of the ungodly, there were some that were capable of a free-thought, and were witnesses for Christ, even in the midst of his enemies. The matter of fact was plain; that this was a true miracle, the more it was searched into, the more it was cleared; and this brought his former like words to mind, and gave occasion to speak magnificently of them, *τοιαυτα σημεια, so great signs, so many, so evident*. And the inference from it is very natural; such things as these could never be done by a man that is a sinner, i. e. not by any mere man, in his own name, and by his own power; or rather, not by one that is a cheat or an impostor, and in that sense a sinner; such a one may indeed shew some signs and lying wonders, but not such signs and true wonders as Christ wrought. How could a man produce such divine credentials, if he had not a divine commission? Thus there was a division among them, a schism, so the word is; they clashed in their opinion, a warm debate arose, and the house divided upon it. Thus God defeats the counsels of his enemies by dividing them; and by such testimonies as these given against the malice of persecutors, and the rubs they meet with, their designs against the church are sometimes rendered ineffectual, and always inexcusable.

2. After their enquiry concerning the cure, we must observe their enquiry concerning the author of it. And here observe,

1. What the man said of him in answer to their inquiry. They ask him, *ver. 17. What sayest thou of him, seeing that he has opened thine eyes*? What dost thou think of his doing this? And what ideas hast thou of him that did it? If he should speak slightly of Christ in answer to this, as he might be tempted to do to please them, now he was in their hands, as his parents had done; if he should say, I know not what to make of him, he may be a conjuror for ought I know, or some mountebank, they would have triumphed in it: nothing confirms Christ's enemies in their enmity to him, so much as the slights put upon him by those that have passed for his friends. But if he should speak honourably of him, they would prosecute him upon their new law, which did not except, no, not his own patient; would make him an example, and so deter others from applying themselves to him for cures, which, though they came cheap from Christ, yet they would make them pay dear for. Or perhaps Christ's friends proposed to have the man's own sentiments concerning his physician, and were willing to know, since he appeared to be a sensible man, what he thought of him. Note, Those whose eyes Christ has opened, know best what to say of him, and have great reason, upon all occasions, to say well of him. What think ye of Christ.

To this question the poor man makes a short, plain and direct answer, *he is a prophet*, he is one inspired and sent of God to preach and work miracles, and delivers to the world a divine message. There had been no prophets among the Jews of three hundred years passed, yet they did not conclude they should have no more, for they knew he was yet to come who should seal up vision and prophecy, Dan. ix. 24. It should seem this man had not any thoughts that he was the Messiah, the great prophet, but one of the same rank with the other prophets: The woman of Samaria concluded he was a prophet, before she had any thought of his being the Messiah, John iv. 19. so this blind man thought well of Christ according to the light he had, though he did not think well enough of him; but being faithful in what he had already attained to, God revealed even that unto him. This poor blind beggar had a clearer judgment of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and saw further into the proofs of a divine mission, than the masters in Israel that assumed an authority to judge of prophets.

2. What they said of him in reply to the man's testimony. Having in vain attempted to invalidate the evidence of the fact, and finding that indeed a notable miracle was wrought, and they could not deny it; they renew their attempt to banter it, and run it down, and do all they can to shake the good opinion the man had of him that opened his eyes; and to convince him that he was an ill man, *ver. 24. Give God the glory, we know that this man is a sinner*. Two ways this is understood, either,

(1.) By way of advice, to take heed of ascribing the praise of his cure to a sinful man, but to give it all to God, to whom it was due; thus under colour of zeal for the honour of God, they rob Christ of his honour, as those do who will not worship Christ as God, under pretence of zeal for this great truth, that there is but one God to be worshipped; whereas this is his declared will, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father; and in confessing that Christ is Lord, we give glory to God the Father. When God makes use of men that are sinners as instruments of good to us, we must give God the glory, for every creature is that to us that he makes it to be, and yet there is a gratitude owing to the instruments. It was a good word, *give God the praise*, but here was ill used; and there seems to be this further in it, this man is a sinner, an ill man, and therefore give the praise so much the more to God who could work by such an instrument.

(2.) Or by way of adjuration, so some take it. We know (though thou dost not, who hast but lately come as it were into a new world), that this

man is a sinner, i. e. a great impostor that cheats the country, this we are sure of, therefore give God praise (as Joshua said to Achan) by making an ingenuous confession of the fraud and collusion which we are confident there is in this matter; in God's name man tell the truth. Thus is God's name abused in papal inquisitions, when by oaths *ex officio*, they extort accusations of themselves from the innocent, and of others from the ignorant. See how basely they speak of the Lord Jesus, *we know that this man is a sinner*, is a man of sin: in which we may observe, (1.) Their insolence and pride. They would not have it thought when they asked the man what he thought of him, that they needed information; nay, they know very well that he is a sinner; and nobody can convince them of the contrary. He had challenged them to their faces, *chap. viii. 46. to convince him of sin*, and they had nothing to say; but now behind his back they speak of him as a malefactor, convicted upon the notorious evidence of the fact. Thus false accusers make up in confidence what is wanting in proof. (2.) The injury and indignity hereby done to the Lord Jesus. When he became man he not only took upon him the form of a servant, but of a sinner, Rom. viii. 3. and passed for a sinner in common with the rest of mankind. Nay, he was represented as a sinner of the first magnitude, a sinner above all men; and being made sin for us he despised even this shame.

3. The debate that arose between the Pharisees and this poor man concerning Christ: they say, *he is a sinner*; he saith, *he is a prophet*. As it is an encouragement to those who are concerned for the cause of Christ, to hope that it shall never be lost for want of witnesses, when they find a poor blind beggar picked up from the way-side, and made a witness for Christ, to the faces of his most impudent enemies; so it is an encouragement to those who are called out to witness for Christ, to find with what prudence and courage this man managed his defence according to the promise, *it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak*. Though he had never seen Jesus, he had felt his grace.

Now in the parley between the Pharisees and this poor man we may observe three steps,

First, He sticks to the certain matter of fact, which they endeavour to shake the evidence of. That which is doubtful, is best resolved into that which is plain, and therefore, 1. He adheres to that which to himself at least, and to his own satisfaction, was past dispute, *ver. 25. Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not*, I will not now stand to dispute, nor need I, the matter is plain, and though I should altogether hold my peace, would speak for itself; or, as it might better be rendered, *if he be a sinner, I know it not*, I see no reason to say so, but the contrary, for this one thing I know, and can be more sure of than you can be of that which you are so confident of, that whereas I was blind, now I see, and therefore must not only say, that he has been a good friend to me, but that he is a prophet, I am both able and bound to speak well of him. Now here, (1.) He tacitly reproves their great assurance of the ill character they gave of the blessed Jesus. You say you know him to be a sinner, I that know him as well as you do, cannot give him any such character. (2.) He boldly relies upon his own experience of the power and goodness of the holy Jesus, and resolves to abide by it. There is no disputing against experience, nor arguing a man out of his senses; here is one that is properly an eye-witness of the power and grace of Christ, though he had never seen him. Note, As Christ's enemies are most valued by those that have felt the want of them, that have been blind, and now see, so the most powerful and durable affections to Christ are those that arise from an experimental knowledge of him, 1 John i. 1. Acts iv. 2.

He doth not here give a nice account of the method of the cure nor pretend to describe it philosophically, but in short, *whereas I was blind, now I see*. Thus in the work of grace in the soul, though we cannot tell when and how, by what instruments, and by what steps and advances the blessed change was wrought, yet we may take the comfort of it, if we can say through grace, *whereas I was blind, now I see*. I did live a carnal, worldly, sensual life, but thanks be to God it is now otherwise with me, Eph. v. 8.

2. They endeavour to baffle and stifle the evidence by a needless repetition of their enquiries into it. *Ver. 26. What did he to thee? How opened he thine eyes*? They asked these questions, (1.) Because they wanted something to say, and would rather speak imperpertently, than seem to be silenced or run-aground. Thus eager disputants that resolve they will have the last word by such vain repetitions, to avoid the shame of being silenced, make themselves accountable for many idle words. (2.) Because they hoped by putting the man upon repeating his evidence, to catch him tripping in it, or watering, and then they would think they had gained a good point.

Secondly, He upbraids them with their obstinate infidelity, and invincible prejudices, and they revile him as a disciple of Jesus, *ver. 27—29. where the man is more bold with them, and they more sharp upon him than before*.

1. The man boldly upbraids them with their wilful and unreasonable opposition of the evidence of this miracle, *ver. 27. He would not gratify them with a repetition of the story, but bravely replied, I have told you already, and ye did not hear, wherefore would ye hear it again, will ye also be his disciples*? Some think he spoke seriously, and really expecting that they would be convinced. He has many disciples, I will be one, will you also come in among them? Some zealous young Christians see so much reason for religion, that they are ready to think every one should presently be of their mind. But it rather seems to be spoken ironically, *will you be his disciples*? No, I know you abhor the thoughts of it, why then should you desire to hear that which will either make you his disciples, or leave you inexcusable if you be not. Those that wilfully shut their eyes against the light, as these Pharisees here did, (1.) They make themselves contemptible and base, as these here did, who were justly exposed by this poor man for denying the conclusion, when they had nothing to object against either of the premises. (2.) They forfeit all the benefit of further instructions and means of knowledge and conviction: They that have been told once and would not hear, why should they be told it again? Jer. li. 9. see Matt. x. 14. (3.) They hereby receive the grace of God in vain. This is implied in that, *will ye be his disciples*? No, you resolve you will not, why then would you hear it again? Only that you may be his accusers and persecutors? Those who will not see cause to embrace Christ, and join with his followers, yet, one would think, should see cause enough not to hate, and persecute him and them.

2. For this they scorn and revile him, *ver. 28. when they could not resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spoke, they broke out into a passion, and scolded him, began to call names, and gave him ill language*. See what Christ's faithful witnesses must expect from the adversaries of his truth and cause; let them count upon all manner of evil to be said of them, Matt. v. 11. It is the method commonly taken by unreasonable men, what is wanting in truth and reason to make it out with railing.

1. They taunted this man for his affection to Christ; they said *thou art his disciple*, as if that were reproach enough, and they could not say worse of him. We scorn to be his disciples, and will leave that preferment to thee, and such scoundrels as thou art. They do what they can to put Christ's religion in an ill name, and to represent the profession of it as a contemptible,

contemptible, scandalous character. They *reviled him*. The vulgar reads it, *maledixerunt eum*, they *cursed him*; and what was their curse? It was this, *be thou his disciples*; may such a curse (saith St. Austin here) ever be on us and our children! If we take our measures of credit and disgrace from the sentiment or clamours rather of a blind deluded world, we shall *glory in our shame*, and be *ashamed of our glory*. They had no reason to call this man a *disciple* of Christ, he had neither seen him or heard him preach, only he had spoken favourably of a kindness he had done him, and this they could not bear.

2. They gloried in their relation to Moses as their just master, *we are Moses's disciples*, and do not either need or desire any other teacher. Note, 1. Carnal professors of religion are very apt to trust to, and be proud of the dignities and privileges of their profession, while they are strangers to the principles and powers of their religion. These Pharisees had before boasted of their good parentage, *we are Abraham's seed*; here of their good education, *we are Moses's disciples*, as if these would save them. 2. It is sad to see how much one part of religion is opposed under colour of zeal for another part; there was a perfect harmony between Christ and Moses; Moses prepared for Christ, and Christ perfected Moses, so that they might be disciples of Moses, and become the disciples of Christ too: and yet they here put them in opposition, nor could they have persecuted Christ, but under the umbrage of the abused name of Moses. Thus they, who gainsay the doctrine of free grace, value themselves as promoters of man's duty, we are Moses's disciples; while on the other hand, they that cancel the obligation of the law, value themselves as the assertors of free grace, and as if none were the disciples of Jesus but they, whereas if we rightly understand the matter, we shall see God's grace and man's duty meet together and kiss and befriend each other.

3. They gave some sort of reason for their adhering to Moses against Christ, *ver. 2. We know that God spake unto Moses; as for this fellow we know not whence he is*. But did they not know that among other things God spake unto Moses, this was one, that they must not expect another prophet, and a further revelation of the mind of God; yet when our Lord Jesus, pursuant to what God said to Moses, did appear and gave sufficient proofs of his being *that prophet*, under pretence of sticking to the old religion and the established church, they not only forfeited, but forsook their own mercies. In this argument of theirs observe,

1. How impertinently they alledge in defence of their enmity to Christ, that which none of his followers ever denied, *we know that God spake unto Moses*, and thanks be to God we know it too, more plainly to Moses than to any other of the prophets; but what then? God spake to Moses, and doth it therefore follow that Jesus is an impostor? Moses was a prophet, it is true, and might not Jesus be a prophet too? Moses spake honourably of Jesus, *John v. 46.* and Jesus spake honourably of Moses, *Luke vi. 29.* they were both faithful in the same house of God, Moses as a servant, Christ as a son; therefore their pleading Moses's divine warrant in opposition to Christ's was an artifice to make unthinking people believe it was as certain that Jesus was a false prophet as that Moses was a true one, whereas they were both true.

2. How absurdly they urge their ignorance of Christ, as a reason to justify their contempt of him. *As for this fellow*. Thus scornfully do they speak of the blessed Jesus, as if they did not think it worth while to charge their memories with a name so inconsiderable; they express themselves with as much disdain of the shepherd of Israel, as if he had not been worthy to be *set with the dogs of their flock*; as for *this fellow*, this sorry fellow, *we know not whence he is*. They looked upon themselves to have the key of knowledge, that none must preach without a licence first had and obtained from them, under the seal of their court; they expected that all who set up for teachers should apply themselves to them, and give them satisfaction, which this Jesus had never done, never so far owned their power as to ask their leave, and therefore they concluded him an intruder, and one that came not in by the door; they *knew not whence*, or what *he was*, and therefore conclude him a *sinner*, whereas those we know little of, we should judge charitably of; but proud and narrow souls will think none good but themselves, and those that are in their interest. It was not long ago, that the Jews had made the contrary to this, an objection against Christ, *chap. vii. 27. We know this man whence he is, but when Christ comes, no man knows whence he is*. Thus they could with the greatest assurance either affirm or deny the same thing, according as they saw it would serve their turn. They *knew not whence he was*, and whose fault was that? (1.) It is certain they ought to have enquired; the Messiah was to appear about this time, and it concerned them to look about them, and examine every indication, but these priests like those, *Ser. ii. 5. said not where is the Lord?* (2.) It is certain they might have known whence he was, might have known not only by searching the register, that he was born in Bethlehem; but by enquiring into his doctrine, miracles, and conversation, they might have known that he was sent of God, and had better orders, a better commission, and far better instructions than any they could give him. See the absurdity of infidelity, men will not know the doctrine of Christ, because they are resolved they will not believe it, and then pretend they do not believe it, because they do not know it. Such ignorance and unbelief, which support one another, aggravate one another.

Thirdly, He reasons with them concerning this matter; and they *excommunicate him*.

1. The poor man finding that he had reason on his side, which they could not answer, grows more bold, and, in prosecution of his argument, is very close upon them.

(1.) He admires their obstinate infidelity, *ver. 30. not at all daunted by their frowns*, nor shaken by their confidence, he bravely answered, why, *herein is a marvellous thing*, the strangest instance of wilful ignorance that ever was heard of among men that pretended to sense, that *you know not from whence he is*, and yet he has opened mine eyes. Two things he wonders at,

(1.) That they should be *strangers* to a man so famous. He that could open the eyes of the blind, must certainly be a considerable man, and worth taking notice of; the Pharisees were inquisitive men, had a large correspondence and acquaintance, thought themselves the eyes of the Church, and its watchmen, and yet that they should talk, as if they thought it below them to take cognizance of such a man as this, and have conversation with him, this is a *strange thing indeed*. There are many who pass for learned and knowing men, that understand business, and can talk sense in other things, that yet are ignorant to a wonder of the doctrine of Christ, that have no concern, no, not so much as a curiosity to acquaint themselves with that which the angels desire to look into.

(2.) That they should question the *divine mission* of one that had undoubtedly wrought a *divine miracle*. When they said, *we know not whence he is*, they meant, we know not any proof that his doctrine and ministry is from heaven; now this is strange (saith the poor man) that the miracle wrought upon me has not convinced you, and put the matter out of doubt. That you whose education and studies give you advantages above others of discerning the things of God, that you should thus shut your eyes against

the light. It is a *marvellous work*, and a *wonder*, when the wisdom of the wise thus perishest, *Isa. xxix. 14.* that they deny the truth of that which they cannot gainsay the evidence of. Note, 1. The unbelief of those who enjoy the means of knowledge and conviction, is indeed a *marvellous thing*, *Mark vi. 6.* 2. Those who have themselves experienced the power and grace of the Lord Jesus, do especially wonder at the wilfulness of those that reject him, and having such good thoughts of him themselves, are amazed that others have not so too. Had Christ opened the eyes of these Pharisees, they would not have doubted his being a prophet.

(2.) He argues strongly against them, *ver. 31, 32, 33.* They had determined concerning Jesus, that he was not of God, *ver. 16.* but was a *sinner*, *ver. 24.* In answer to which the man here proves not only that he was not a *sinner*, *ver. 31.* but that he was of God, *ver. 33.* He argues here, (1.) With great knowledge. Though he could not read a letter in the book, he was well acquainted with the scripture and the things of God; had wanted the sense of seeing, yet had well improved that of hearing, by which *faith cometh*; yet that would not have served him, if he had not had an extraordinary presence of God with him, and special aids of his Spirit upon this occasion. (2.) With great zeal for the honour of Christ, whom he could not endure to hear run down, and evil spoken of. (3.) With great boldness and courage, and undauntedness, not terrified by the proudest of his adversaries. They that are ambitious of the favours of God, must not be afraid of the frowns of men. "See here (saith Dr. Whitby) a blind man and unlearned, judging more rightly of divine things than the whole learned council of the Pharisees. Whence we learn, that we are not always to be led by the authority of councils, popes, or bishops; and that it is not absurd for laymen, sometimes, to vary from their opinions; these overseers being sometimes guilty of great oversights."

Now the man's argument may be reduced into form, somewhat like that of David, *Psal. lxxvi. 18, 19.* The proposition of David's argument is, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear me*; here it is to the same purpose, *God heareth not sinners*; the assumption there is, *but verily God hath heard me*; here it is, *Verily God hath heard Jesus*, he has been honoured with the doing of that which was never done before; the conclusion there is to the honour of God, *blessed be God*; here to the honour of the Lord Jesus, *He is of God*.

1. He lays it down for an undoubted truth, that none but good men are the favourites of heaven, *ver. 31. Now we know, you know it as well as I, that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth.* Here,

1. The assertions rightly understood are true.

(1.) Be it spoken to the terror of the wicked, *God heareth not sinners*, i. e. such sinners as the Pharisees meant, when they said of Christ, *he is a sinner*, one that under the umbrage of God's name, advanced the devil's interest. This speaks no discouragement to repenting returning sinners, but to those that go on still in their trespasses, that make their prayers not only consistent with, but subservient to their sins, as the hypocrites do, God will not hear them; he will not own them, nor give an answer of peace to their prayers.

(2.) Be it spoken to the comfort of the righteous, that *if any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth*. Here is, 1. The complete character of a good man, he is one that worships God and doth his will, he is constant in his devotions at set times, and regular in his conversation at all times. He is one that makes it his business to glorify his Creator, by the solemn adorations of his name, and a sincere obedience to his will and law; both must go together. 2. The unspeakable comfort of such a man, him God hears; hears his complaints, and relieves him: hears his appeals, and rights him: hears his praises, and accepts them: hears his prayers, and answers them, *Psal. xxxiv. 15.*

2. The application of these truths is very pertinent to prove that he, at whose word such a divine power was put forth, as cured one born blind, was not an ill man, but having manifestly such an interest in the holy God, as that he heard him always, *John xi. 41, 42.* was certainly a holy one.

2. He magnifies the miracles which Christ had wrought to strengthen the argument the more, *ver. 32. Since the world began was it not heard, that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.* This is to shew either, (1.) That it was a true miracle, and above the power of nature; it was never heard, that any man, by the use of natural means, had cured one that was born blind; no doubt but this man and his parents had been very inquisitive into cases of this nature, whether any such had been helped, and could hear of none, which enabled him to speak this with the more assurance. Or, (2.) That it was an extraordinary miracle, and beyond the precedents of former miracles, neither Moses nor any of the prophets, though they did great things, ever did such things as this; wherein divine power and divine goodness seem to strive which should outshine. Moses wrought miraculous plagues, but Christ wrought miraculous cures. Note, 1. The wondrous works of the Lord Jesus were such, as the like had never been done before. 2. It becomes those who have received mercy from God, to magnify the mercies they have received, and to speak honourably of them; not that thereby glory may rebound to themselves, and they may seem to be extraordinary favourites of heaven, but that God may have so much the more glory.

3. He therefore concludes, *If this man were not of God he could do nothing*, i. e. nothing extraordinary, no such thing as this, and therefore no doubt he is of God, notwithstanding his non-conformity to your traditions, in the business of the sabbath-day. Note, What Christ did on earth, sufficiently demonstrated what he was in heaven, for if he had not been sent of God, he could not have wrought such miracles. It is true the man of sin comes with lying wonders, but not with real miracles. It is likewise supposed, that a false prophet might, by divine permission, give a sign or a wonder, *Deut. xiii. 1, 2.* yet the case is so put, as that it would carry with it its own confutation, for it is to enforce a temptation to serve other gods, which was to set God against himself. It is true likewise, that many wicked people have in Christ's name done many wonderful works which doth not prove them that wrought them to be of God, but him in whose name they were wrought. We may each of us know by this whether we are of God or no? What do we? What do we do for God, for our souls in working out our salvation; what do we more than others?

2. The Pharisees finding themselves unable either to answer his reasonings or to bear them, fell foul upon him, and with a great deal of pride and passion they broke off the discourse, *ver. 34.* where we are told,

1. What they said; having nothing to reply to his argument, they reflected upon his person, *Thou wast altogether born in sin, and dost thou teach us?* They take that heinously, which they had reason to take kindly, and are cut to the heart with rage, by that which should have pricked them to the heart with repentance.

Observe, 1. How they despised him, and what a severe censure they passed upon him; thou wast not only born in sin, as every man is, but altogether so, wholly corrupt, and bearing about with thee in thy body as well as in thy soul, the marks of that corruption; thou wast one whom nature

stigmatized. Had he still continued blind, it had been barbarous to upbraid him with it, and from thence to gather that he was more deeply tainted with sin than other people; but most unjust to take notice of it, now the cure had not only rolled away the reproach of his blindness but had *stigmatized* him as a favourite of heaven. Some take it thus, thou hast been a *common beggar*, and such are too often *common sinners*, and thou hast, no doubt, been as bad as any of them: whereas by his discourse he had proved the contrary, and had evidenced a deep tincture of piety. But when proud imperious Pharisees resolve to run a man down, any thing shall serve for a pretence.

4. How they *disdain* to learn of him, or to receive instruction from him. *Dost thou teach us?* A mighty emphasis must be laid here upon *thou* and *us*. What? wilt thou a silly sorry fellow, ignorant and illiterate, that has not seen the light of the sun a day to an end, a beggar by the way-side, of the very dregs and refuse of the town, wilt thou pretend to teach us, that are the sages of the law and grandees of the church, that sit in Moses's chair, and are masters in Israel? Note, Proud men scorn to be taught, especially by their inferiors, whereas we should never think ourselves too old, or too wise, or too good to learn. Those that have much wealth would have more, and why not those that have much knowledge? And those are to be valued by whom we may improve in learning. What a poor excuse was this for the Pharisees infidelity, that it would be a disparagement to them to be instructed and informed, and convinced by such a silly fellow as this.

2. What they did. They *cast him out*. Some understand it only of a rude and scornful dismissal of him from their council-board; they turned him out of the room by head and shoulders, and perhaps ordered their servants to kick him; they thought it was time to send him far enough, that came so near their consciences; but it seems rather to be a judicial act, they excommunicated him, it is likely, with the highest degree of excommunication, they cut him off from being a member of the church of Israel. This poor man (saith Dr. Lightfoot) was the first confessor, as John Baptist was the first martyr of the Christian church. There was a law made, that if any confessed Jesus to be the Christ, he should be *cast out of the synagogue*, ver. 22. But this man had only said of Jesus that he was a prophet, was *of God*, and yet they stretch the law to bring him under the lash of it, as if he had confessed him to be the Christ. To be justly excommunicated and cast out of a pure church, *clave non errante*, is a very dreadful thing, for what is so bound on earth is bound in heaven; but to be cast out of a corrupt church, which it is our duty to go out of, and that unjustly, though cast out with an *anathema*, and all the bug-bear ceremonies of bell, book, and candle, is what we have no reason at all to dread, or be aggrieved at; *The curse causeless shall not come*. If they cast Christ's followers out of their synagogues, as he foretells, John xvi. 2. there is no harm done when they are become *synagogues of Satan*.

35. ¶ Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, *Dost thou believe on the Son of God?* 36. He answered and said, *Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?* 37. And Jesus said unto him, *Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.* 38. And he said, *Lord, I believe.* And he worshipped him.

In these verses we may observe,

First, The tender care which our Lord Jesus took of this poor man, ver. 35. When Jesus heard that they had cast him out, for it is likely the town rang of it, and every body called out shame upon them for it, then he found him, which implies his seeking him, and looking after him, that he might encourage and comfort him, (1.) Because he had to the best of his knowledge spoken so very well, so bravely, so boldly, in defence of the Lord Jesus. Note, Jesus Christ will be sure to stand by his witnesses, and own those that own him, and his truth and ways. Earthly princes neither do nor can take cognizance of all that vindicate them and their government and administration; that our Lord Jesus knows and observes all the faithful testimonies we bear to him at any time, and a book of remembrance is written, and it shall redound not only to our credit hereafter, but our comfort now. (2.) Because the Pharisees had cast him out and abused him. Besides the common regard which the righteous Judge of the world has to those who suffer wrongfully, *Psal. ciii. 6.* there is a particular notice taken of those that suffer in the cause of Christ, and for the testimony of a good conscience. Here was one poor man suffering for Christ, and he took care that as his afflictions abounded, his consolations should much more abound. Note, 1. Though persecutors may exclude good men from their communion, yet they cannot exclude them from communion with Christ, nor put them out of the way of his visits. Happy they who have a friend that men cannot debar them from! 2. Jesus Christ will graciously find and take up those who for his sake are unjustly rejected and cast out by men. He will be a hiding place to his out-casts, and appear to the joy of those whom their brethren hated and cast out.

Secondly, The comfortable converse Christ had with him, wherein he brings him acquainted with the consolation of Israel. He had well improved the knowledge he had, and now Christ gives him further instruction, for he that is faithful in a little, shall be intrusted with more, *Matt. xiii. 12.*

1. Our Lord Jesus examines his faith. *Dost thou believe on the Son of God?* *Dost thou give credit to the promises of the Messiah?* *Dost thou expect his coming, and art thou ready to receive and embrace him when he is manifested to thee?* This was that faith of the Son of God which they lived by, who lived before his manifestation. Observe, (1.) The Messiah is here called the *Son of God*, and so the Jews had learned to call him from the prophecies, *Psal. ii. 7.*—*lxxxix. 27.* see John i. 49. *Thou art the Son of God*, i. e. the true Messiah. They that expected the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, delighted rather in calling him the *Son of David*, which gave more countenance to that expectation, *Matt. xxii. 42.* And Christ, that he might give us an idea of his kingdom, as purely spiritual and divine, calls himself the *Son of God*, and rather *Son of Man* in general, than of David in particular. (2.) The desires and expectations of the Messiah, which the Old Testament saints had, guided by and grounded upon the promise, were graciously interpreted and accepted as their believing on the *Son of God*. This faith Christ here enquires after, *Dost thou believe?* Note, The great thing which is now required of us, (1 John iii. 23.) and will shortly be enquired after concerning us, is our *believing on the Son of God*, and by this we must stand or fall for ever.

2. The poor man solicitously enquires concerning the Messiah he was to believe in, professing his readiness to embrace him, and close with him, ver. 36. *Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?* (1.) Some think he did know that Jesus, who cured him, was the Son of God, but did not know which was Jesus, and therefore supposing this that talked with him to be a follower of Jesus, desired him to do him the favour to direct him to him;

not that he might satisfy his curiosity with the sight of him, but that he might the more firmly believe in him, and profess his faith, and *know whom he had believed*. See *Cant. v. 6, 7.*—*iii. 2, 3.* It is Christ only that can direct us to himself. (2.) Others think he did know that this person who talked with him was Jesus, the same that cured him, whom he believed a great and good man and a prophet, but did not yet know that he was or was to be the son of God, and the true Messiah. Lord, I believe there is a Christ to come, thou who hast given me bodily sight, tell me. O tell me, who and where this Son of God is. Christ's question intimated that the Messiah was come, and was now among them, which he presently takes the hint of and asks, *Where is he, Lord?* The question was rational and just, *Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?* For how could he believe in one of whom he had not heard; the work of ministers is to tell us *who the Son of God is*, that we may believe on him, John xx. 31.

5. Our Lord Jesus graciously reveals himself to him as that Son of God, on whom we must believe, ver. 37. *Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.* Thou needest not go far to find out the Son of God, *Behold the Word is nigh thee.* We do not find that Christ did thus expressly, and in so many words reveal himself to any other, as to this man here, and to the woman of Samaria, *I that speak unto thee am he*; he left others to find out by arguments who he was, but to these weak and foolish things of the world he chose to manifest himself, so as not to the *wise and prudent*.

Christ here describes himself to this man by two things, which express his great favour to him.

(1.) *Thou hast seen him*, and he was much indebted to the Lord Jesus for opening his eyes that he might see him. Now he was made sensible more than ever, what an unspeakable mercy it was to be cured of his blindness, that he might see the Son of God, a sight which rejoiced his heart more than that of the *light of this world*. Note, The greatest comfort of bodily eyesight is its serviceableness to our faith and the interest of our souls. How contentedly might this man have returned to his former blindness, like old Simeon, now his eyes had *seen God's salvation*. If we apply it to the opening of the eyes of the mind, it intimates that spiritual sight is given principally for this end, that we may see Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6. Can we say that by faith we have seen Christ, seen him in his beauty and glory, in his ability and willingness to save, so seen him, as to be satisfied concerning him, to be satisfied in him? let us give him the praise that opened our eyes.

(2.) It is he that *talketh with thee*, and he was indebted to Christ for condescending to do this. He was not only favoured with a sight of Christ, but was admitted into fellowship and communion with him. Great princes are willing to be seen by those whom yet they will not vouchsafe to talk with. But Christ by his word and Spirit, talks with those whose desires are towards him, and in talking with them manifests himself to them as he did to the two disciples, when he talked their hearts warm, *Luke xxiv. 32.* Observe, This poor man was solicitously enquiring after the Saviour, when at the same time he saw him, and was talking with him. Note, Jesus Christ is oftentimes nearer the souls that seek him, than they themselves are aware of. Doubting Christians are sometimes saying, *Where is the Lord?* and fearing, that they are cast out from his sight, when at the same time it is he that *talketh with them*, and *puts strength into them*.

4. The poor man readily entertains this surprising revelation, and, in a transport of joy and wonder, he said *Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him*.

(1.) He professed his faith in Christ, *Lord, I believe thee to be the Son of God*. He would not dispute any thing that he said who had shewed such mercy to him, and wrought such a miracle for him, nor doubt of the truth of a doctrine, which was confirmed by such signs. Believing with the heart, he thus confesseth with the mouth; and now the bruised reed was become a cedar.

(2.) He paid his homage to him. He worshipped him, not only gave him the civil respects due to a great man, and the acknowledgments owing to a kind benefactor, but herein gave him *divine honour*, and worshipped him as the *Son of God* manifested in the flesh. None but God is to be worshipped, so that in worshipping Jesus, he owned him to be God. Note, True faith will shew itself in a humble adoration of the Lord Jesus. They who believe in him, will see all the reason in the world to worship him. We never read any more of this man; but it is very likely from henceforth he became a constant follower of Christ.

39. ¶ And Jesus said, For judgment am I come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. 40. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, are we blind also? 41. Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see: therefore your sin remaineth.

Christ having spoken comfort to the poor man that was persecuted, here speaks conviction to his persecutors, a specimen of the distributions of trouble and rest at the great day, 2 Thess. i. 6, 7. Probably this was not immediately after his discourse with the man, but he took the next opportunity that offered itself to have a saying to the Pharisees.

First, Here is the account Christ gives of his design in coming into the world, ver. 39. *For judgment I am come to order and administer the great affairs of the kingdom of God among men*, and am invested with a *judicial power* in order thereunto, to be executed in conformity to the *wise counsels of God*, and in pursuance of them. What Christ spoke he spoke, not as a preacher in the pulpit, but as a king upon the throne, and a judge upon the bench. His business into the world was great, he came to keep the assizes and general gaol delivery; he came for judgment, that is, (1.) To preach a doctrine and law, which would try men and effectually discover and distinguish them, and would be completely fitted in all respects to be the rule of government now, and of judgment shortly. (2.) To put a difference between men by revealing the thoughts of many hearts, and laying open men's true characters by this one test, whether they were *well or ill* affected to him. (3.) To change the face of government in his church, to abolish the Jewish economy, to take down that fabric, which though erected for the time by the hand of God himself, yet by tract of time was antiquated; and by the incurable corruptions of the managers of it, was become rotten; and dangerous, and to erect a new building by another model, to institute new ordinances and offices, to abrogate Judaism, and enact Christianity, for this judgment he came into the world, and it was a great revolution.

This great truth he explains by a metaphor borrowed from the miracle he had lately wrought, *That they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind*. Such a difference of Christ's coming is often spoken of; to some his gospel is a savour of life unto life, to others of death unto death.

1. This is applicable to nations and people, that the Gentiles, who had long been destitute of the light of divine revelation, might see it; and the Jews,

Jews, who had long enjoyed it, might have the things of their peace hid from their eyes, *Hos. i. 10.—ii. 23.* The Gentiles see a great light, while blindness is *happened unto Israel*, and their eyes are darkened.

2. To particular persons. Christ came into the world, (1.) *Intentionally* and designedly to give sight to them that were spiritually blind, by his word to reveal the object, and by his spirit to heal the organ, that many precious souls might be turned from darkness to light. He came for judgment, i. e. to set those at liberty from their dark prison, that were willing to be released, *Isa. lxi. 1.* (2.) *Eventually*, and in the issue, that those which see might be made blind; that those who have a high conceit of their own wisdom, and set up that in contradiction to divine revelation, might be sealed up in ignorance and infidelity. The preaching of the cross was foolishness, and an infatuating thing to them, who by wisdom knew not God. Christ came into the world for this judgment, to administer the affairs of a spiritual kingdom seated in men's minds. Whereas in the Jewish church, the blessings and judgments of God's government were mostly temporal, now the method of administration should be changed; and as the good subjects of his kingdom should be blessed with spiritual blessings in heavenly things, such as arise from a due illumination of the mind, so the rebels should be punished with spiritual plagues, not war, famine, and pestilence, as formerly, but such as arise from a judicial infatuation, hardness of heart, terror of conscience, strong delusions, vile affections. In this way Christ will judge between cattle and cattle; *Ezek. xxxix. 17.*

Secondly, Here is the Pharisees cavil at this. They were with him, not desirous to learn any good from him; but to form evil against him, and they said, *Are we blind also?* When Christ said, that they which see should by his coming be made blind, they apprehended that he meant them, who were the seers of the people, and valued themselves by their insight and foresight. Now, say they, we know that the common people are blind, but are we blind also? What we, the rabbins, the doctors, the learned in the laws, the graduates in the schools, are we blind too? This is *scandalum magnatum*. Note, Many times those that need reproof most, and deserve it best, though they have wit enough to discern a tacit one, yet have not grace enough to bear a just one. These Pharisees took this reproof for a reproach, as those lawyers, *Luke xi. 45.* *Are we blind also?* Darest thou say that we are blind, whose judgment every one has such a veneration for, values and veils to? Note, Nothing fortifies mens' corrupt hearts more against the convictions of the word, nor more effectually repels them, than the good opinion, especially if it be a high opinion, which others have of them; as if all that had gained applause with men, must needs obtain acceptance with God, than which nothing more false and deceitful, for God sees not as man sees.

Thirdly, Here is Christ's answer to this cavil, which if it did not convince them, yet silenced them. If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, *We see*, therefore your sin remaineth. They gloried in it that they were not blind, as the common people, were not so credulous and manageable as they, but would see with their own eyes, having abilities, as they thought, sufficient for their own conduct, so that they needed not any body to lead them. This very thing which they gloried in, Christ here tells them, was their shame and ruin. For,

(1.) *If ye were blind, ye should have no sin.* (1.) If you had been really ignorant, your sin had not been so deeply aggravated, nor should ye have had so much sin to answer for as now you have. If you were blind, as the poor Gentiles are, and many of your own poor subjects, from whom you have taken the key of knowledge, you should have had comparatively no sin. The times of ignorance God winked at; invincible ignorance, though it doth not justify sin, excuseth it, and lessens the guilt. It will be more tolerable with those that perish for lack of vision, than for those who rebel against the light. (2.) If you had been sensible of your own blindness, if when you would see nothing else, you could have seen the need of one to lead you, you would soon have accepted Christ as your guide, and then you would have had no sin, you would have submitted to an evangelical righteousness, and have been put into a justified state. Note, Those who are convinced of their disease, are in a fair way to be cured, for there is not a greater hindrance to the salvation of souls than self-sufficiency.

2. But now ye say, *We see*; now ye have knowledge, and are instructed out of the law, your sin is highly aggravated; and now you have a conceit of that knowledge, and think you see your way better than any body can shew it you, therefore your sin remains, your case is desperate, and your disease incurable. And as those are most blind who will not see, so their blindness is most dangerous who fancy they do see. No patients are so hardly managed as those in a frenzy, who say they are well, and nothing ails them. The sin of those who are self-conceited and self-confident remains, for they reject the gospel of grace, and therefore the guilt of their sin remains unpardoned, and they forfeit the Spirit of grace, and therefore the power of their sin remains unbroken. Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? Hearest though the Pharisees say, *We see?* There is more hope of a fool, of a publican and a harlot, than of such.

C H A P. X.

In this chapter we have, (1.) Christ's parabolical discourse concerning himself, as the door of the sheep, and the shepherd of the sheep, ver. 1—18. (2.) The various sentiments of the people upon it, ver. 19—21. (3.) The dispute Christ had with the Jews in the temple at the feast of dedication, ver. 22—39. (4.) His departure into the country thereupon, ver. 40—42.

1. **V**ERILY, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3. To him the porter openeth: and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out. 4. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. 5. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. 6. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. 7. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. 9. I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved,

and shall go in and out and find pasture. 10. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. 11. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 12. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them and scattereth the sheep. 13. The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. 14. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. 15. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. 17. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

It is not certain whether this discourse was at the feast of dedication in the winter, spoken of ver. 22. which may be taken as the date, not only of what follows, but of what goes before, that which countenanceth this is, that Christ in his discourse there, carries on the metaphor of the sheep, ver. 26, 27. from whence, it seems that that discourse and this were at the same time; or whether this was a continuation of his parley with the Pharisees, in the close of the foregoing chapter. The Pharisees supported themselves in their opposition to Christ with this principle, that they were the pastors of the church, and that Jesus having no commission from them, was an intruder and an impostor, and therefore the people were bound in duty to stick to them against him. In opposition to this, Christ here describes who were the false shepherds, and who the true, leaving them to infer what they were.

First, Here is the parable of similitude proposed, ver. 1—5. it is borrowed from the custom of that country in the management of their sheep. Similitudes used for the illustration of divine truths, should be taken from those things that are most familiar and common, that the things of God be not clouded by that which should clear them. The preface to this discourse is solemn, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Amen, Amen*; this vehement asseveration speaks the certainty and weight of what he said; we find *Amen* doubled in the church's praises and prayers, *Psal. xli. 13.—lxxii. 19.—lxxxix. 52.* If we would have our *Amens* accepted in heaven, let Christ's *Amens* be prevailing on earth; his repeated *Amens*.

In the parable we have,

1. The evidence for a thief and a robber, that comes to do mischief to the flock, and damage to the owner, ver. 1. He enters not by the door, as having no lawful cause of entry, but climbs up some other way, at a window, or some breach in the wall. How industrious are wicked people to do mischief! What plots will they lay? what pains will they take? what hazards will they run in their wicked pursuits? which should shame us out of our slothfulness and cowardice in the service of God.

2. The character that distinguished the rightful owner, who has a property in the sheep, and a care for them; he enters in by the door, as one having authority, ver. 2. and he comes to do them some good office or other, to bind up that which is broken, and strengthen that which is sick, *Ezek. xxxiv. 16.* Sheep need man's care, and in return for it are serviceable to man, *1 Cor. ix. 7.* they clothe and feed those by whom they are clothed and fed.

3. The ready entrance that the shepherd finds, ver. 3. To him the porter openeth. Anciently they had their sheep-folds within the outer gates of their houses, for the greater safety of their flocks, so that none could come to them the right way, but such as the porter opened to, or the master of the house gave the keys to.

4. The care he takes, and the provision he makes for his sheep. The sheep hear his voice; when he speaks familiarly to them, when they came into the fold, as men now do to their dogs and horses: and which is more, he calls his own sheep by name, so exact is the notice he takes of them, the account he keeps of them; and he leads them out from the fold to the green pastures. And (ver. 4, 5.) when he turns them out to graze, he doth not drive them, but (such was the custom in those times) he goes before them to prevent any mischief or danger that might meet them, and they being used to it, follow him and are safe.

5. The strange attendance of the sheep upon the shepherd; they know his voice, so as to discern his mind by it, and to distinguish it from that of a stranger; for the ox knows his owner, *Isa. i. 3.* and a stranger will they not follow, but as suspecting some ill design will flee from him, not knowing his voice, but that it is not the voice of their own shepherd. This is a parable; we have the key to it, *Ezek. xxxiv. 31.* *Ye my flock are men, and I am your God.*

Let us observe something from the parable itself.

1. That good men are fitly compared to sheep. Men, as creatures, depending on their Creator, are called the sheep of his pasture. Good men, as new creatures, have the good qualities of sheep, harmless and inoffensive as sheep; meek and quiet without noise; patient as sheep under the hand both of the shearer and of the butcher; useful and profitable, tame and tractable to the shepherd, and sociable one with another, and much used in sacrifices.

2. The church of God in the world is a sheep-fold, into which the children of God that were scattered abroad, are gathered together, *John xi. 52.* and in which they are united and incorporated; it is a good fold, *Ezek. xxxiv. 14.* see *Mich. ii. 12.* This fold is well fortified, for God himself is as a wall of fire about it, *Ezek. ii. 5.*

3. This sheep-fold lies much exposed to thieves and robbers; crafty seducers that debauch and deceive, and cruel persecutors that destroy and devour, grievous wolves, *Acts xx. 29.* Thieves that would steal Christ's sheep from him, to sacrifice them to devils, or steal their food from them that they might perish for lack of it. Wolves in sheep's clothing, *Matt. vii. 16.*

4. The great Shepherd of the sheep has a wonderful care of the flock and of all that belong to it. God is the great Shepherd, *Psal. xxiii. 1.—lxxx. 1.* He knows them that are his, calls them by name, marks them for himself, leads them out to fat pastures, makes them both feed and rest there; speaks comfortably to them, guards them by his providence, guides them by his Spirit and word, and goes before them to set them in the way of his steps.

5. The under-shepherds, who are intrusted to feed the flock of God, ought to be careful and faithful in the discharge of that trust; magistrates must

must defend them, and protect and advance all their secular interests; ministers must serve them in their spiritual interests, must feed their souls with the word of God faithfully opened and applied, and with gospel ordinances duly administered, *taking the oversight of them; they must enter by the door of a regular ordination, and to such the porter will open; the Spirit of Christ will set before them an open door, give them authority in the church, and assurance in their own bosoms.* They must know the members of their flocks by name, and watch over them; must lead them into the pastures of public ordinances, preside among them, be their mouth to God, and God's to them: and in their conversation must be examples to the believers.

6. Those who are truly the sheep of Christ will be very observant of their shepherd, and very cautious and shy of strangers. (1.) *They follow their shepherd, for they know his voice, having both a discerning ear, and an obedient heart.* (2.) *They flee from a stranger, and dread following him, because they know not his voice.* It is dangerous following those in whom we discern not the voice of Christ, and who would draw us from faith in him to fables concerning him. And they that have experienced the power and efficacy of divine truths upon their souls, and have the savour and relish of them, have a strange sagacity to discover Satan's wiles, and to discern between good and evil.

Secondly, The Jews ignorance of the drift and meaning of this discourse, ver. 6. *Jesus spoke this parable to them, this figurative, but wise, elegant, and instructive discourse, but they understood not what the things were which he spake unto them; were not aware whom he meant by the thieves and robbers and whom by the good shepherd.* It is the sin and shame of many who hear the word of Christ, that they do not understand it, and they do not because they will not, and because they will mis-understand it. They have no acquaintance with, nor taste of the things themselves, and therefore do not understand the parables and comparisons with which they are illustrated. The Pharisees had a great conceit of their own knowledge, and could not bear that it should be questioned, and yet they had not sense enough to understand the things that Jesus spoke of; they were above their capacity. Many times the greatest pretenders to knowledge, are most ignorant in the things of God.

Thirdly, Christ's explication of this parable, opening the particulars of it fully. Whatever difficulties there may be in the sayings of the Lord Jesus we shall find him ready to explain himself, if we be but willing to understand him. We shall find one scripture expounding another, and the blessed Spirit interpreter to the blessed Jesus.

Christ in the parable had distinguished the shepherd from the robber by this, that he enters in by the door. Now in the reddition of the parable, he makes himself to be both the door by which the shepherd enters, and the shepherd that enters in by the door. Though it may be a solecism in rhetoric to make the same person to be both the door and the shepherd, it is no solecism in divinity to make Christ to have his authority from himself, as he has life in himself; and himself to enter by his own blood, as the door, into the holy place.

1. Christ is the door. This he saith to them who pretended to seek for righteousness, but like the Sodomites wearied themselves to find the door, where it was not to be found: He saith it to the Jews, who would be thought God's only sheep, and to the Pharisees, who would be thought their only shepherds. *I am the door of the sheep-fold: the door of the church.* 1. He is a door shut to keep out thieves and robbers, and such as are not fit to be admitted. The shutting of the door is the securing of the house; and what greater security has the church of God than the interposal of the Lord Jesus, and his wisdom, power, and goodness betwixt it and all its enemies? 2. He is as a door open for passage and communication. 1. By Christ as the door, we have our first admission into the flock of God, John xiv. 6. 2. We go in and out in a religious conversation, assisted by him, accepted in him; walking up and down in his name, Zech. x. 12. 3. By him God comes to his church, visits it, and communicates himself to it. 4. By him as the door the sheep are at last admitted into the heavenly kingdom, Matt. xxv. 31. More particularly,

1. Christ is the door of the sheep-fold, so that none who come not in him by him, are to be accounted pastors, but (according to the rule laid down, ver. 1.) *thieves and robbers, though they pretended to be shepherds, but the sheep did not hear them.* All those that had the character of shepherds in Israel, whether magistrates or ministers, that exercised their office without any regard to the Messiah, or any other expectations of him than what were suggested by their own carnal interest.

Observe, 1. The character given of them, they are *thieves and robbers*, ver. 8. all that went before him, not in time, many of them were faithful shepherds, but all that anticipated his commission, and went before he sent them, Jer. xxiii. 21. that assumed a precedency and superiority above him, as the antichrist is said to exalt himself, 2 Thess. ii. 4. The Scribes and Pharisees and chief priests, *All, even as many as have come before me, that have endeavoured to forestall my interest, and to prevent my gaining any room in the minds of people, by prepossessing them with prejudices against me, they are thieves and robbers, and steal those hearts which they have no title to, defrauding the right owner of his property.* They condemned our Saviour as a thief and robber, because he did not come in by them as the door, nor take out a licence from them; but he shews that they ought to have received their commission from him, and to have been admitted by him, and to have come after him, which because they did not, but stepped before him, they were *thieves and robbers.* They would not come in as his disciples, and therefore were condemned as usurpers, and their pretended commissions vacated and superseded. Note, Rivals with Christ are robbers of his church, however they pretend to be shepherds, nay shepherds of shepherds.

2. The care taken to preserve the sheep from them, *but the sheep did not hear them.* Those that had a true savour of piety, that were spiritual and heavenly, and sincerely devoted to God and godliness, could by no means approve of the traditions of the elders, nor relish their formalities. Christ's disciples without any particular instructions from their Master, made no conscience of eating with unwashed hands, or plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath-day; for nothing is more opposite to true Christianity than Pharisaism is: nor any thing more disrelishing to a soul truly devout than their hypocritical devotions.

3. Christ is the door of the sheep, ver. 9. *By me, (as I say, through me as the door) if any man enter into the sheepfold as one of the fold, he shall be saved; shall not only be saved from thieves and robbers, but he shall be happy, he shall go in and out.*

Here is, 1. Plain directions how to come into the fold, we must come in by Jesus Christ as the door. By faith in him as the great Mediator between God and man, we come into covenant and communion with God. No entering into God's church, but by coming into Christ's church; nor are any looked upon as members of the kingdom of God among men, but those that are willing to submit to the grace and government of the Redeemer. We must now enter by the door of faith, Acts. xiv. 27. since the door of iniquity is shut against us, and that pass become unpassable, Gen. iii. 24.

2. Precious promises to those who observe this direction:

1. *They shall be saved hereafter, that is the privilege of their home; these*

sheep shall be saved from being *distained and impounded* by divine justice for trespass done, satisfaction being made for the damage by their great shepherd; saved from being a prey to the roaring lion; they shall be *for ever happy.*

2. In the mean time they shall go in and out, and find pasture; that is the privilege of their way. They shall have their conversation in the world by the grace of Christ, shall be in his fold as a man at his own house, where he has free ingress, egress, and regress; true believers are at home in Christ: when they go out, they are not shut out as strangers, but have liberty to come in again; when they come in, they are not shut in as trespassers, but have liberty to go out. They go out to the field in the morning, they come in to the fold at night; and in both the shepherd leads and keeps them; and they find pasture in both; grass in the field, fodder in the fold. In public, in private they have the word of God to converse with, by which their spiritual life is supported and nourished, and out of which their gracious desires are satisfied, they are replenished with the goodness of God's house.

3. Christ is the shepherd, ver. 10, &c. He was prophesied of under the Old Testament as a shepherd, Isa. xl. 11. Ezek. xxxiv. 23.—xxxvii. 24. Zech. xiii. 7. In the New Testament he is spoken of as the great shepherd, Heb. xiii. 20. the chief shepherd, 1 Pet. v. 4. the shepherd and bishop of our souls, 1 Pet. ii. 25. God our great owner, the sheep of whose pasture we are by creation, hath constituted his Son Jesus to be our shepherd: and here again and again he owns the relation. He hath all that care of his church, and every believer, that a good shepherd has of his flock; and expects all that attendance and observance from the church and every believer, which the shepherds in those countries had from their flocks.

2. Christ is a shepherd, and not as the thief, not as those that came not in by the door. Observe,

(1.) The mischievous design of the thief, ver. 10. *The thief cometh not with any good intent, but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.* (1.) Those whom they steal, whose hearts and affections they steal from Christ and his pastures, they kill and destroy spiritually, for the heresies they privily bring in are damnable. Deceivers of souls are murderers of souls. They that steal away the scripture by keeping it in an unknown tongue, steal away the sacraments by maiming them and altering the property of them, that steal away Christ's ordinances, to put their own inventions in the room of them, they kill and destroy, ignorance and idolatry are destructive things. (2.) Those whom they cannot steal, whom they can neither lead, drive, nor carry away from the flock of Christ, they aim by persecutions and massacres to kill and destroy corporally. He that will not suffer himself to be robbed is in danger to be slain.

(2.) The gracious design of the shepherd: he is come,

1. To give life to the sheep. In opposition to the design of the thief, which is to kill and destroy, which was the design of the Scribes and Pharisees; Christ saith, I am come among men, 1. That they might have life. He came to put life into the flock, the church in general, which had seemed rather like a valley full of dry bones, than like a pasture covered over with flocks; Christ came to vindicate divine truths, to purify divine ordinances, to redress grievances, and revive dying zeal, to seek them of his flock that were lost, to bind up that which was broken, Ezek. xxxiv. 16. and this to his church is as life from the dead. He came to give life to particular believers, life is inclusive of all good, and stands in opposition to the death threatened, Gen. ii. 17. That we might have life, as a criminal has when he is pardoned; as a sick man when he is cured; a dead man when he is raised; that we might be justified, sanctified, and at last glorified. 2. That they might have it more abundantly, καὶ περισσόν τινος. As we read it, it is comparative, that they might have a life more abundant than that which was lost and forfeited by sin; more abundant than that which was promised by the law of Moses, length of days in Canaan, more abundant than could have been expected, or than we are able to ask or think. But it may be construed without a note of comparison, That they might have abundance, or, might have it abundantly. Christ came to give life and περισσόν τινος, something more, something better, life with advantage. That in Christ we might not only live, but live comfortably, live plentifully, live and rejoice, life in abundance is eternal life; life without death, or fear of death; life, and much more.

2. To give his life for the sheep, and this that he might give life to them, ver. 11. *The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.* (1.) It is the property of every good shepherd to hazard and expose his life for the sheep. Jacob did so, when he would go through such a fatigue to attend them, Gen. xxxi. 40. so did David, when he slew the lion and the bear. Such a shepherd of souls was St. Paul who would gladly spend, and be spent for their service, and counted not his life dear to him, in comparison with their salvation. But, (2.) It was the prerogative of the great shepherd to give his life to purchase his flock, Acts xx. 28. to satisfy for their trespass, and to shed his blood to wash and cleanse them.

(2.) Christ is a good shepherd and not as a hireling; there were many that were not thieves, aiming to kill and destroy the sheep, but passed for shepherds, yet were very careless in the discharge of their duty, and through their neglect the flock was greatly damaged; foolish shepherds, idle shepherds, Zech. xi. 15—17. In opposition to these,

1. Christ here calls himself the good shepherd, ver. 11. and again, ver. 14, ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός, that shepherd, that good shepherd, whom God had promised. Now Jesus Christ is the best of shepherds, the best in the world to take the oversight of souls, none so skillful, so faithful, so tender as he, no such feeder and leader, no such protector and healer of souls as he.

2. He proves himself so in opposition to all hirelings, ver. 12, 13, 14. Where observe,

1. The carelessness of the unfaithful shepherd described, ver. 12, 13: He that is a hireling, that is employed as a servant, and is paid for his pains, whose own the sheep are not, who has neither profit nor loss by them, he sees the wolf coming, or some other danger threatening, and he leaves the sheep to the wolf, for in truth he careth not for them. Here is plain reference to that of the idle shepherd, Zech. xi. 7.

Here is the description of bad shepherds, magistrates, and ministers, both their bad principles and bad practices.

1. Their bad principles, the root of their bad practices. What makes those that have the charge of souls in trying times betray their trust, and in quiet times not to mind it? What makes them false and trifling, and self-seeking? It is because they are hirelings, and care not for the sheep. That is, (1.) The wealth of the world is the chief of their good: it is because they are hirelings. They undertook the shepherd's office, as a trade to live and grow rich by, not as an opportunity of serving Christ and doing good. It is the love of money and of their own bellies, that carries them on in it. Not that those are hirelings, who while they serve at the altar live, and live comfortably upon the altar; the labourer is worthy of his meat; and a scandalous maintenance will soon make a scandalous ministry; but those are hirelings that love the wages more than the work, and set their hearts upon that as the hireling is said to do, Deut. xxiv. 15. see 1 Sam. ii. 29. Isa. lvi. 11. Mic. iii. 5—11. (2.) The work of their place is the least of their care; they value not the sheep, are unconcerned in the souls of others, their business is to be their brothers lords, not their brothers keepers or helpers; they seek their

their own things, and not like Timothy naturally *cure* for the state of their souls; what can be expected, but they will flee when the wolf comes? He *careth not for the sheep*, for he is one whose own the sheep are not; in one respect we may say of the best of the under-shepherds, that the sheep are not their own, they have not dominion over them, or property in them. *Feed my sheep and my lambs*, saith Christ. But in respect of dearth and affection they should be *their own*. Paul looked upon those as *his own*, whom he called his *dearly beloved and longed for*. Those who do not cordially espouse the church's interests, and make them *their own*, will not long be faithful to them.

2. Their *bad practices*, the effect of these bad principles, *ver. 12*. See here, 1. How basely the hireling deserts his post, when he sees the wolf coming, though then there is most need of him, he *leaves the sheep and flees*. Note, Those who mind their safety more than their duty, are an easy prey to Satan's temptations. 2. How fatal the consequences are; the hireling fancied the sheep might look to themselves, but it doth not prove so, the wolf catcheth them, and scatters the sheep, and woeful havoc is made of the flock, which will all be charged upon the treacherous shepherd. The blood of perishing souls is required at the hand of the careless watchmen.

3. See here the grace and tenderness of the good shepherd, set over-against the former, as it was in the prophecy, *Ezek. xxxiv. 21, 22. I am the good shepherd*. It is matter of comfort to the church and all her friends, that however she may be damaged and endangered by the treachery and mis-management of her under-officers, the Lord Jesus is and will be, as he ever has been, *the good shepherd*.

Here are two great instances of the shepherd's goodness.

First, His *acquainting* himself with his flock, with all that belong or in any wise appertain to his flock, which are of two sorts, both known to him.

(1.) He is acquainted with all that are *now of his flock*, *ver. 14, 15*. as the good shepherd, *ver. 3, 4. I know my sheep, and am known of mine*. Note, There is a mutual acquaintance between Christ and true believers; they know one another very well, and knowledge notes affection.

(1.) Christ *knows his sheep*. He knows with a distinguishing eye who are his sheep, and who are not, he knows the sheep under their many infirmities, and the goats under their most plausible disguises. He knows with a favourable eye those that in truth are his own sheep; he takes cognizance of their state, concerns himself for them, has a tender and affectionate regard to them, and is continually mindful of them in the intercession he ever lives to make within the veil; and visits them graciously by his spirit, and his communion with them, he *knows* them, i. e. he approves and accepts of them, as *Psal. i. 6—xxxvii. 18. Exod. xxxiii. 17*.

(2.) He is *known of them*. He observes them with an eye of favour, and they observe him with an eye of faith. Christ's *knowing his sheep*, is put before *their knowing him*, for he knew and loved us first, *1 John iv. 21*. and it is not so much our *knowing him*, as our being *known of him*, that is our happiness, *Gal. iv. 8*. yet it is the character of Christ's sheep, that they *know him*. Know him from all pretenders and intruders; they know his mind, know his voice, know by experience the power of his death. Christ speaks here, as if he gloried in being known by his sheep, and thought their respects an honour to him.

Upon this occasion Christ mentions, *ver. 15*. the mutual acquaintance between his Father and him; *As the Father knows me, even so know I the Father*. Now this may be considered, either, 1. As the ground of that intimate acquaintance and relation, which is between Christ and believers. The covenant of grace, which is the bond of that relation, is founded in the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son, which we may be sure stands firm; for the Father and the Son understood one another perfectly well in that matter, and there could be no mistake, which might leave the matter at an uncertainty, or bring it into any hazard. The Lord Jesus *knows whom he hath chosen*, and is sure of them, *John xiii. 18*. And they also *know whom they have trusted*, and are sure of him, *2 Tim. i. 12*. and the ground of both is the perfect knowledge which the Father and Son had of one another's mind, when the counsel of peace was between them both. Or, 2. As an apt similitude, illustrating the intimacy that is between Christ and believers; it may be connected with the foregoing words, thus; *I know my sheep, and am known of mine, even as the Father knows me, and I know the Father*; compare *John xvi. 21*. (1.) As the Father knew the Son, and loved him, and owned him in his sufferings when he was led as a sheep to the slaughter, so Christ knows his sheep, and has a watchful tender eye upon them, will be with them when they are left alone, as he was *with him*. (1.) As the Son knew the Father, loved and obeyed him, and always did those things that pleased him, and confided in him as his God, even when he seemed to forsake him, so believers know Christ with an obsequential sidereal regard.

1. He is acquainted with those that are *hereafter to be of his flock*, *ver. 16. Other sheep I have*, have a right to, and an interest in, *which are not of this fold*, of the Jewish church, *them also I must bring*. Observe,

(1.) The eye that Christ had to the poor Gentiles; he had sometimes intimated his special concern for the *lost sheep of the house of Israel*, to them indeed his personal ministry was confined, but saith he, *I have no other sheep*. Those who in process of time should believe in Christ and be brought into obedience to him from among the Gentiles, are here called *sheep*, and he is said to have them, though as yet they were *uncalled*, and many of them *unborn*, because they were chosen of God, and given to Christ in the counsels of divine love from eternity. Christ had a right to many a soul by virtue of the Father's donation, and his own purchase, which he has not yet the possession of; thus he had *much people* in Corinth, when as yet it lay in wickedness, *Acts xviii. 10*. Those other sheep *I have*, saith Christ, I have them on my heart, have them in my eye, am as sure to have them as if I had them already. Now Christ speaks of those *other sheep*; (1.) To take off the contempt that was put upon him, as having *few followers*, as having but a *little flock*, and therefore if a *good shepherd*, yet a *poor shepherd*; but saith he, I have more sheep than you see. (2.) To take down the pride and vain glory of the Jews, who thought the Messiah must gather all his sheep from among them. No, saith Christ, I have others to whom I will set with the lambs of my flock, though you disdain to set them with the dogs of your flock.

(2.) The purposes and resolves of his grace concerning them; *them also I must bring*, bring home to God, bring into the church, and in order to that, bring off from their vain conversation, bring them back from their wanderings, as that *lost sheep*, *Luke xv. 5*. But why *must* he bring them? What was the necessity? (1.) The necessity of *their case* required it; I must bring, or they must be left to wander endlessly, for, like sheep, they will never come back of themselves, and no other can or will bring them. (2.) The necessity of *his own engagements* required it; he must bring them, or he would not be faithful to his trust, and true to his undertaking. They are *my own*, bought and paid for, and therefore I must not neglect them or leave them to perish. He must in honour bring those whom he was intrusted with.

(3.) The happy effect and consequent of this, in two things, (1.) They shall hear *my voice*. Not only my voice shall be heard among them; whereas they have not heard, and therefore could not believe, now the sound of the

gospel shall go to the ends of the earth, but it shall be heard by them; I will speak and give to them to hear. Faith comes by hearing, and our diligent observance of the voice of Christ, is both a means and an evidence of our being brought to Christ, and to God by him. (2.) *There shall be one fold, and one shepherd*. As there is one shepherd, so there shall be one fold. Both Jews and Gentiles, upon their turning to the faith of Christ, shall be incorporated into one church, be joint and equal sharers in the privileges of it without distinction. Being united to Christ, they shall unite in him; two sticks shall become one in the hand of the Lord. Note, One shepherd makes one fold; one Christ makes one church. As the church is one in its constitution, subject to one head, animated by one spirit, and guided by one rule, so the members of it ought to be one in love and affection, *Eph. iv. 3, 4, 5, 6*.

Secondly, Christ's offering up himself for his sheep, in another proof of his being a *good shepherd*, and in this he yet more commended his love, *ver. 15—17, 18*.

1. He declares his purpose of *dying for his flock*, *ver. 15. I lay down my life for the sheep*. He not only ventured his life for them, in such a case, the hope of saving it may balance the fear of losing it; but he actually deposited it, and submitted to a necessity of dying for our redemption, *τινημι*, I put it as a pawn or pledge; as purchase-money paid down. Sheep appointed for the slaughter, ready to be sacrificed, were ransomed with the blood of the shepherd. He laid down his life *ὡς τὸν πρόβατον*, not only for the good of the sheep, but in *their stead*. Thousands of sheep had been offered in sacrifice for their shepherds, as sin-offerings, but here, by a surprising reverse, the shepherd is sacrificed for the sheep. When David, the shepherd of Israel, was himself guilty, and the destroying angel drew his sword against the flock for his sake, with good reason did he plead, *These sheep, what evil have they done, let thine hand be against me*, *2 Sam. xxiv. 17*. But the Son of David was sinless and spotless, and his sheep, what evil have they not done? Yet he saith, *Let thine hand be against me*. Christ here seems to refer to that prophet, *Zech. xiii. 7. Awake, O sword against my shepherd*; and though the smiting of the shepherd be for the present the scattering of the flock, it is in order to the gathering of them in.

2. He takes off the offence of the cross, which to many is a stone of stumbling, by four considerations:

1. That his *laying down his life for the sheep* was the condition, the performance of which entitled him to the honours and powers of his exalted state, *ver. 17. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I laid down my life*. Upon these terms I am as mediator, to expect my Father's acceptance and approbation, and the glory designed me, that I become a sacrifice for the chosen remnant. Not but that as the Son of God, he was beloved of his Father from eternity, but as *God-man*, as *Immanuel*, he was therefore beloved of the Father, because he undertook to *die for the sheep*; therefore God's soul delighted in him as his elect, because herein he was his *faithful servant*, *Isa. xlii. 1*. therefore he said, *This is my beloved Son*. What an instance is this of God's love to man, that he loved his Son the more for loving us! See what a value Christ puts upon his Father's love, that to recommend himself to that, he would lay down his life for the sheep: Did he think God's love recompence sufficient for all his services, and sufferings and shall we think it too little for our's, and court the smiles of the world to make it up? *Therefore doth my Father love me*, i. e. me, and all that by faith become one with me: me and the mystical body, *because I lay down my life*; Christ's death was the purchase of his Father's love both to him and us.

2. That his laying down his life was in order to his resuming it; I lay down my life, *that I may receive it again*. (1.) This was the effect of his Father's love, and the first step of his exaltation, the fruit of that love. Because he was God's *holy One*, he must not see corruption, *Psal. xvi. 10*. God loved him too well to leave him in the grave. (2.) This he had in his eye in *laying down his life*, that he might have an opportunity of declaring himself to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection. *Rom. i. 4*. By a divine stratagem (like that before Ai, *Josh. viii. 15*.) he yielded to death, as if he were smitten before it, that he might the more gloriously conquer death, and triumph over the grave. He laid down a *vilified* body, that he might resume a *glorified* one, fit to ascend to the world of spirits; laid down a life adapted to this world, but resumed one adapted to the other, like a corn of wheat, *John xii. 24*.

3. That he was perfectly voluntary in his sufferings and death, *ver. 18. No one doth or can force my life from me against my will, but I freely lay it down of myself, I deliver it as my own act and deed, for I have* (which no man has) *power to lay it down and take it again*.

1. See here the power of Christ, as the lord of life, particularly of his own life, which he had in himself.

1. He had power to *keep his life* against all the world, so that it could not be wrested from him without his own consent. Though Christ's life seems to be taken by storm, yet really it was surrendered, otherwise it had been impregnable and never taken. The Lord Jesus did not fall into the hands of his persecutors because he could not avoid it, but threw himself into their hands because his hour was come. *No man taketh my life from me*. This was such a challenge as was never given by the most daring hero.

2. He had power to *lay down his life*. (1.) He had *ability* to do it. He could, when he pleased, slip the knot of union between soul and body, and without any act of violence done to himself, could disengage them from each other: having voluntarily *taken up* a body, he could voluntarily lay it down again; which appeared when he cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. (2.) He had *authority* to do it, *Isa. li. 1*. Though we could find instruments of cruelty, wherewith to make an end of our own lives, yet *id possumus quod jure possumus*; we are not at liberty to do it; but Christ had a sovereign authority to dispose of his own life as he pleased; he was no debtor as we either to life or death, but perfectly *sui juris*.

3. He had power to *take it again*, we have not; our life once laid down, is as *water spilt upon the ground*; but Christ, when he laid down his life still had it within reach, within call, and could resume it again. Parting with it by a voluntary conveyance, he might limit the surrender at pleasure, and he did it with power of revocation; which was necessary to preserve the intentions of the surrender.

2. See here the grace of Christ, since none could demand his life of him by law, or extort it by force, he *laid it down of himself* for our redemption. He offered himself to be the Saviour, *Lb, I come*; and then the necessity of our case calling for it, he offered himself to be a sacrifice, *Here am I, let those go their way; by the which will we are sanctified*, *Heb. x. 10*. He was both the offerer and the offering, so that his *laying down his life* was his offering up himself.

4. That he did all this by the express order and appointment of his Father, into which he ultimately resolves the whole affair. *This commandment have I received of my Father*; not such a commandment as made what he did necessary prior to his own susception and undertaking; but this was the law of mediation, which he was willing to have written in his heart, so as to delight in doing the will of God according to it, *Psal. xl. 8*.

19. ¶ There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. 20. And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? 21. Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

We have here an account of the people's different sentiments concerning Christ, on occasion of the foregoing discourse; there was a *division*, a *schism*, among them, they differed in their opinions, which threw them into heats and parties. Such a ferment as this they had been in before, *chap. vii. 43-ix. 16.* and where there has once been a division, a little thing will make a *division* again. Rents are sooner made, than made up or mended. This division was occasioned by the sayings of Christ, which one would think should rather have united them all in him as their centre, but they set them at variance, as Christ foresaw, *Luke xiii. 41.* but it is better men should be *divided* about the doctrine of Christ, than *united* in the service of sin, *Luke xi. 21.*

See what the debate was in particular.

1. Some upon this occasion spoke ill of Christ and of his sayings, either openly in the face of the assembly, for his enemies were very impudent, or privately among themselves; they said, *He has a devil, and is mad, why hear ye him?*

(1.) They reproach him as a *demoniac*. The worst of characters is put upon the best of men. He is a distracted man, he raves, and is delirious, and no more to be heard, than the rambles of a man in Bedlam. Thus still, if a man preaches seriously and pressingly of another world, he shall be said to talk like an enthusiast, and it is all imputed to fancy, a heated brain, and a crazed imagination.

(2.) They ridicule his hearers: *Why hear ye him?* why do you so far encourage him, as to take notice of what he saith? Note, Satan ruins many, by putting them out of conceit with the word and ordinances, and representing it as a weak and silly thing to attend upon them. Men would not be thus laughed out of their necessary food, and yet suffer themselves to be laughed out of what is more necessary. They that hear Christ, and mix faith with what they hear, will soon be able to give a good account *why they hear him.*

2. Others stood up in defence of him and his discourse, and though the stream ran strong, dared to swim against it; and though perhaps they did not believe on him as the Messiah, yet they could not bear to hear him thus abused.

If they could say no more of him, this they would maintain, that he was a man in his wits, that he had not a devil, that he was neither *senseless* nor *graceless*. The absurd and most unreasonable reproaches, that have sometimes been cast upon Christ and his gospel, have excited those to appear for him and it, who otherwise had no great affections to either. Two things they plead.

1. The excellency of his doctrine: *These are not the words of him that hath a devil;* they are not idle words; distracted men do not use to talk at this rate. They are not the words of one that is either *violently possessed* with a devil, or *voluntarily in league* with the devil. Christianity, if it be not the true religion, is certainly the greatest cheat that ever was put upon the world; and if so, it must be of the devil, who is the father of all lies; but it is certain, the doctrine of Christ is no *doctrine of devils*, for it is levelled directly against the devil's kingdom, and Satan is too subtle to be divided against himself. So much of holiness there is in the words of Christ that we may conclude, they are *not the words of one that has a devil*, and therefore are the words of one that was sent of God; are not from hell, and must be from heaven.

2. The power of his miracles: *Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?* i. e. a man that has a devil. Neither mad men nor ill men use to work miracles. Devils are not such lords of the power of nature, as to be able to work such miracles; nor are they such friends to mankind, as to be willing to work them if they were able. The devil will sooner put out men's eyes than open them. Therefore Jesus had not a devil.

22. ¶ And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. 23. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. 24. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. 25. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. 26. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. 27. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28. And I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. 30. I and my Father are one. 31. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? 33. The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. 34. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, ye are gods? 35. If ye called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken? 36. Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? 37. If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him.

We have here another rencounter between Christ and the Jews in the temple, in which it is hard to say which is more strange, the gracious words that came out of his mouth, or the spiteful ones that came out of their's.

2. We have here the time when this conference was; it was *at the feast of dedication*, and it was *winter*, a feast that was annually observed by consent, in remembrance of the dedication of a new altar, and the purging of the temple, by Judas Maccabæus, after the temple had been profaned, and the altar defiled; we have the story of it at large in the history of the Maccabees, *lib. i. cap. 4.* we have the prophecy of it, *Dan. viii. 13, 14.* see more of the feast, *2 Mac. i. 18.* The return of their liberty was to them as life from the dead, and in remembrance of it, they kept an annual feast on the twenty-fifth day of the month *Cisleu*, about the beginning of *December*, and seven days after. The celebrating of it was not confined at Jerusalem, as that of the divine feast was, but every one observed it in his own place, not as a *holy time*, it is only a divine institution that can *sanctify* a day, but as a *good time*, as the days of Purim, *Esther ix. 18.* Christ fore-casted to be now at Jerusalem, not in honour of the feast, which did not require his attendance there, but that he might improve those eight days of vacation for good purposes.

2. The place where it was, *ver. 23. Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch;* so called, *Acts iii. 11.* not because built by Solomon, but in the same place with that which had borne his name in the first temple, and the name was kept up for the greater reputation of it. Here Christ walked to observe the proceedings of the great Sanhedrin that sat here, *Psal. lxxxii. 1.* He walked ready to give audience to any that should apply themselves to him, to offer them his service. He walked as it should seem, for some time *alone*, as one neglected; walked pensive in the foresight of the ruin of the temple. Those that have any thing to say to Christ, may find him in the temple, and walk with him there.

3. The conference itself, in which observe,
First, A weighty question put to him by the Jews, *ver. 24. They came round about him to tease him: he was waiting for an opportunity to do them a kindness, and they took the opportunity to do him a mischief; ill-will for good-will is no rare and uncommon return.* He could not enjoy himself, no not in the temple, his Father's house, without disturbance. They came about him as it were to lay siege to him; *encompassed him about like bees.* They came about him as if they had a joint and unanimous desire to be *satisfied*; came as one man, pretending an *impartial* and importunate enquiry after truth, but intending a general assault upon our Lord Jesus; and seemed to speak the sense of their nation, as if they were the mouth of the Jews, *How long dost thou make us to doubt? if thou be the Christ, tell us.*

1. They quarrel with him as if he had unfairly held them in suspense hitherto. *Ἐν ᾧ χρόνῳ ἡμᾶς ἀγῖς. How long dost thou steal away our heart? Or, take away our souls?* So some read it; basely intimating that what share he had of the people's love and respect he did not come fairly by it, but by indirect methods, as Absalom, stole the hearts of the men of Israel; and as seducers deceive the hearts of the simple, and so draw away disciples after them, *Rom. xvi. 18. Acts x. 30.* But most interpreters understand it as we do, *How long dost thou keep us in suspense?* How long are we kept debating whether thou be the Christ or no, and not able to determine the question? Now, (1.) It was the effect of their infidelity and powerful prejudices, that after our Lord Jesus had so fully proved himself to be the Christ, they were still in doubt concerning it; this they willingly hesitated about, when they might easily have been satisfied. The struggle was between their convictions, which told them he was Christ; and their corruptions, which said no, because he was not such a Christ as they expected. Those who choose to be sceptics may, if they please, hold the balance so, as that the most cogent arguments may not weigh down the most trifling objections, but the scales may still hang even. (2.) It was an instance of their impudence and presumption, that they laid the blame of their doubting upon Christ himself, as if he made them to doubt by inconsistency with himself, whereas in truth they made themselves doubt by indulging their prejudices. If Wisdom's sayings appear doubtful, the fault is not in the object, they are all plain to him that understandeth, but in the eye. Christ would make us to believe; we make ourselves to doubt.

2. They challenge him to give a direct and categorical answer, whether he were the Messiah or no? *If thou be the Christ, as many believe thou art, tell us plainly, not by parables, as, I am the light of the world, and the good shepherd, &c.* and the like, but *totidem verbis*, either that thou art the Christ, or as John Baptist, that thou art not, *John i. 20.* Now this pressing query of their's was *seemingly good*, they pretend to be desirous to know the truth, as if they were ready to embrace it; but it was *really bad*, and put with an ill design; for if he should tell them plainly that he was the Christ, there needed no more to make him obnoxious to the jealousy and severity of the Roman government. Every one knew the Messiah was to be a king, and therefore whoever pretended to be the Messiah would be prosecuted as a traitor, which was the thing they would have been at; for let him tell them never so plainly that he was the Christ, he would have this to say presently, *Thou hearest witness of thyself, as he had, John viii. 13.*

Secondly, Christ's answer to this question; in which,
1. He justifies himself as not at all accessory to their infidelity and scepticism; referring them, (1.) To what he had said, *I have told you.* He had told them that he was the Son of God, the Son of man; that he had life in himself, that he had authority to execute judgment, &c. And is not this the Christ then? These things he had told them, and they believed not, why then should they be told them again merely to gratify their curiosity? *Ye believed not.* They pretended that they only doubted, but Christ tells them they did not believe. Scepticism in religion is no better than downright infidelity. It is not for us to teach God how he should teach us, nor prescribe to him how plainly he should tell us his mind, but be thankful for divine revelation as we have it, which if we do not believe, neither could we be persuaded if it were never so much adapted to our humour. (2.) He refers them to his works, to the example of his life, which was not only perfectly pure, but highly beneficent, and of a piece with his doctrine; and especially to his miracles, which he wrought for the confirmation of his doctrine. It was certain no man could do those miracles except God were with him, and God would not be with him to attest a forgery.

2. He condemns them for their obstinate unbelief, notwithstanding all the most plain and powerful arguments used to convince them. *Ye believed not; and again, ye believed not.* You still are what you always were, obstinate in your belief.

But the reason he gives is very surprising. *Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep:* You believe not in me, because you belong not to me.

(1.) You are not *disposed* to be my followers; are not of a tractable, teachable temper, have no inclination to receive the doctrine and law of the Messiah; you will not herd yourselves with my sheep, will not come and see, come and hear my voice. Rooted antipathies to the gospel of Christ are the bonds of iniquity and infidelity.

(2.) You are not *designed* to be my followers; you are not of *these* that were given me by my Father to be brought to grace and glory. You are not of the number of the elect; and your unbelief, if you persist in it, will be a certain evidence that you are not. Note, Those to whom God never gives the grace of faith, were never designed for heaven and happiness. What Solomon saith of immortality is true of infidelity, *It is a deep ditch, and*

he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein, Prov. xxii. 14. *Non esse electum non est causa incredulitatis proprie dicta, sed causa per accidens: Fidei autem est donum Dei & effectus predestinationis.* So Jansenius distinguisheth well here,

3. He takes this occasion to describe both the gracious disposition and the happy state of those that are *his sheep*; for such there are, though they be not.

1. To convince them that they were not his sheep, he tells them what were the characters of his sheep.

(1.) They hear his voice, ver. 27. for they know it to be his, ver. 4. and he has undertaken that they shall hear it, ver. 16. They discern it, *It is the voice of my beloved*, Cant. ii. 8. They delight in it, are in their element when they are sitting at his feet to hear his word. They do according to it, and make his word their rule. Christ will not account those his sheep that are deaf to his calls, deaf to his charms, *Psal. lviii. 5.*

(2.) They follow him, they submit to his conduct by a cheerful obedience to all his commands, and a pleasant conformity to his Spirit and pattern: The word of command hath always been, *Follow me*. We must eye him as our leader and captain, and tread in his steps, and walk as he walked; follow the prescriptions of his word, the intimations of his providence, and the directions of his Spirit; follow the Lamb, the *dux gregis*, whithersoever he goes. In vain do we hear his voice if we do not follow him.

2. To convince them that it was their great unhappiness and misery not to be of Christ's sheep, he here describes the blessed state and case of those that are; which would likewise serve for the support and comfort of his poor despised followers, and keep them from envying the power and grandeur of those that were not of his sheep.

1. Our Lord Jesus takes cognizance of his sheep, they hear my voice, and I know them; he distinguisheth them from others, 2 Tim. ii. 19. hath a particular regard to every individual, *Psal. xxxiv. 6.* he knows their wants and desires; knows their souls in adversity where to find them, and what to do for them. He knows others afar off, but knows them near at hand.

2. He has provided a happiness for them, suited to them. *I gave unto them eternal life*, ver. 28. (1.) The estate settled upon them is rich, and valuable; it is life, eternal life. Man has a *living soul*, therefore the happiness provided is *life*, suited to his nature. Man has an *immortal soul*, therefore the happiness provided is *eternal life*, running parallel with his duration. *Life eternal* is the felicity and chief good of a *soul immortal*. (2.) The manner of conveyance is free, *I give it to them*; it is not bargained and sold upon a valuable consideration, but given by the free grace of Jesus Christ. The donor has power to give it: He who is the fountain of life and father of eternity, has authorised Christ to give eternal life, *John xvii. 2.* Not *I will give it*, but *I do give it*, it is a gift in present. He gives the assurance of it, the pledge and earnest of it, the first-fruits and foretastes of it. That *spiritual life*, which is *eternal life* begun, heaven in the seed, in the bud, in the embryo.

2. He hath undertaken for their security and preservation to this happiness. 1. They shall be saved from everlasting perdition. *They shall by no means perish for ever*, so the words are. As there is an eternal life, so there is an eternal destruction, the soul not annihilated, but ruined; its being continued, but its comfort and happiness irrecoverably lost: All believers are saved from this; whatever cross they may come under, they shall not come into condemnation. A man is never undone till he is in hell, and they shall not go down to that. Shepherds that have large flocks, often lose some of the sheep, and suffer them to perish, but Christ has engaged that none of his sheep shall perish, not one. 2. They cannot be kept from their everlasting happiness; it is in reserve, but he that gives it them will preserve them to it.

1. His own power is engaged for them: *Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand*. A mighty contest is here supposed about these sheep. The shepherd is so careful of their welfare, that he has them not only within his fold, and under his eye, but in his hand, interested in his special love, and taken under his special protection; all his saints are in thy hand, *Deut. xxxiii. 3.* yet their enemies are so daring, that they attempt to pluck them out of his hand; his, whose own they are, whose care they are; but they cannot, they shall not do it. Note, Those are safe who are in the hands of the Lord Jesus. The saints are preserved in Christ Jesus; and their salvation is not in their own keeping, but in the keeping of a Mediator. The Pharisees and rulers did all they could to frighten the disciples of Christ from following him, reproving and threatening them, but Christ saith, they should not prevail.

2. His Father's power is likewise engaged for their preservation, ver. 29. He now appeared in weakness, and lest his security should therefore be thought insufficient, he brings in his Father as a farther security. Observe,

(1.) The power of the Father. *My father is greater than all*; greater than all the other friends of the church, all the other shepherds, magistrates or ministers, and able to do that for them which they cannot do. Those shepherds slumber and sleep, and it will be easy to pluck the sheep out of their hands, but he keeps his flock day and night. Greater than all the enemies of the church; all the opposition given to her interests, and able to secure his own against all their insults; he is greater than all the combined force of hell and earth. He is greater in wisdom than the old serpent, though noted for subtlety; greater in strength than the great red dragon, though his name be *legion*, and his title *principalities and powers*. The devil and his angels have had many a push, many a pluck for the mastery, but have never yet prevailed, *Rev. xii. 7.* The Lord on high is mightier.

(2.) The interest of the Father in the sheep, for the sake of which this power is engaged for them; it is my Father that gave them me, and he is concerned in honour to uphold his gift: They were given to the Son as a trust to be managed by him, and therefore God will still look after them. All the divine power is engaged for the accomplishment of all the divine counsels.

(3.) The safety of the saints inferred from these two. If this be so, then none (neither man nor devil) is able to pluck them out of the Father's hand, not able to deprive them of the grace they have, or to hinder them from the glory that is designed them; not able to put them out of God's protection, nor get them into their own power. Christ had himself experienced the power of his Father upholding and strengthening him, and therefore puts all his followers into his hand too. He that secured the glory of the Redeemer, will secure the glory of the redeemed.

Further to corroborate the security, that the sheep of Christ may have strong consolation, he asserts the union of these two undertakers, *I and my Father are one*, and have jointly and severally undertaken for the protection of the saints, and their perfection. This speaks, not only the harmony and consent and good understanding that was between the Father and the Son in the work of man's redemption, every good man is so far one with God as to concur with him; therefore it must be meant, of the oneness of the nature of Father and Son, that they are the same in substance, and equal in power and glory.

The fathers urged this, both against the Sabellians, to prove the distinction and plurality of the persons, that the Father and the Son are two:

and against the Arians, to prove the unity of the nature, that these two are one. If we should altogether hold our peace concerning this sense of the words, even the stones which the Jews took up to cast at him would speak it out, for they understood him as hereby making himself God, ver. 33. and he did not deny it. He proves that none could pluck them out of his hand, because they could not pluck them out of the Father's hand, which had not been a conclusive argument, if the Son had not had the same almighty power with the Father, and consequently been one with him in essence and operation.

Thirdly, The rage, and outrage, of the Jews against him for this discourse, *The Jews took up stones again*, ver. 31. It is not the word that is used before, chap. viii. 59. but *ἑλάσαν λίθους*, they carried stones, great stones, stones that were a load, such as they used in stoning malefactors; they brought them from some place at a distance, as it were preparing things for his execution without any judicial process; as if he were convicted of blasphemy upon the notorious evidence of the fact, which needed no further trial. The absurdity of this insult the Jews made upon Christ will appear, if we consider, 1. That they had imperiously, not to say impudently, challenged him to tell them plainly whether he were the Christ or no, and yet now he not only said it, but proved himself so, they condemned him for it as a malefactor. If the preachers of the truth propose it modestly, they are branded as cowards: if boldly, as insolent; but wisdom is justified of her children. 2. That when they had made the like attempt before, it was in vain, he escaped through the midst of them, chap. v. 59. yet they repeat their baffled attempt. Daring sinners will throw stones at heaven, though they return upon their own heads; and will strengthen themselves against the Almighty, though never any hardened themselves against him and prospered.

Fourthly, Christ's tender expostulation with them upon occasion of this outrage, ver. 32. *Jesus answered*, what they did, for we do not find that they said any thing, unless perhaps they stirred up the crowd that they had gathered about him to join with them, crying, stone him, stone him, as afterwards, crucify him, crucify him. When he could have answered them with fire from heaven, he mildly replied, *Many good works have I shewed you from my Father, for which of those works do you stone me?* Words so very tender, that one would think they should have melted a heart of stone.

In dealing with his enemies he still argued from his works; men evidence what they are by what they do. His good works, *καλὰ ἔργα*, excellent, eminent works. *Opera eximia vel praeclara*, it signifies both great works and good works.

1. The divine power of his works convicted them of the most obstinate infidelity. They were works from his Father, so far above the reach and course of nature, as to prove him that did them sent of God, and acting by commission from him. These works he shewed them, he did them, openly before the people, and not in a corner; his works would bear the test, and refer themselves to the testimony of the most inquisitive and impartial spectators. He did not shew his works by candle-light, as they that do them only for shew, but he shewed them at noon-day before the world, *John xviii. 20.* see *Psal. cxi. 6.* His works so undeniably demonstrated that they were an incontestible demonstration of the validity of his commission.

2. The divine grace of his works convicted them of the most base ingratitude. The works he did among them were not only miracles but mercies: not only works of wonder to amaze them, but works of love and kindness to do them good, and so make them good, and endear himself to them: He healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, cast out devils, which were favours, not only to the persons concerned, but to the public; these he had repeated and multiplied, now, for which of these do ye stone me? Ye cannot say I have done you any harm, or given you any just provocation; if therefore you will pick a quarrel with me, it must be for some good work, some good turn done you, tell me for which. Note, 1. The horrid ingratitude that there is in our sins against God and Jesus Christ, is a great aggravation of them, and makes them appear exceeding sinful. See how God argues to this purpose, *Deut. xxxii. 6.* *Jer. ii. 5.* *Micah vi. 3.* 2. We must not think it strange if we meet with those who not only hate us without cause, but are our adversaries for our love, *Psal. xxxv. 12.*—*xli. 9.* When he asks, for which of these do ye stone me, as if he intimates the abundant satisfaction he had in his own innocency, which gives a man courage in a suffering day, so he puts his persecutors upon considering what was the true reason of their enmity, and asking, as all those should do that create trouble to their neighbours, *Why persecute we him?* as Job adviseth his friends to do, *Job xix. 23.*

Fifthly, Their vindication of the attempt they made upon Christ, and the cause upon which they grounded their persecution, ver. 33. What sin will want fig-leaves with which to cover itself, when even the bloody persecutors of the Son of God could find something to say for themselves.

1. They would not be thought such enemies to their country, as to persecute him for a good work; for a good work we stone thee not: For indeed they would scarce allow any of his works to be so. His curing the impotent man, *John v.* and the blind man, *John ix.* were so far from being acknowledged good services to the town, and meritorious, that they were put upon the score of his crimes, because done on the sabbath-day. But if he had done any good works, they would not own that they stoned him for them, though these were really the things that did most exasperate them, chap. xi. 47. thus though most absurd, they could not be brought to own their absurdities.

2. They would be thought such friends to God and his glory, as to prosecute him for blasphemy, because thou being a man, maketh thyself God.

Here is, 1. A pretended zeal for the law. They seem mightily concerned for the honour of the divine majesty, and to be seized with a religious horror at that which they imagined to be a reproach to it: A blasphemer was to be stoned, *Lev. xxiv. 16.* This law, they thought, did not only justify, but sanctify what they attempted, as *Acts xxvi. 9.* Note, The vilest practices are often varnished with plausible pretences. As nothing is more courageous than a well-informed conscience, so nothing more outrageous than a mistaken one. See *Isa. lxvi. 5.* *John xvi. 2.*

2. A real enmity to the gospel, on which they could not put a greater affront, than by representing Christ as a blasphemer. It is no new thing for the worst of characters to be put upon the best of men, by those that resolve to give them the worst of treatment.

1. The crime laid to his charge is blasphemy, speaking reproachfully and despitefully of God. God himself is out of the sinner's reach, and not capable of receiving any real injury; and therefore enmity to God spits its venom at his name, and so shews its ill-will.

2. The proof of the crime, *thou being a man makest thyself God*. And as it is God's glory that he is God, which we rob him of when we make him altogether such a one as ourselves; so it is his glory, that besides him there is no other, which we rob him of when we make ourselves or any creature altogether like him.

Now, 1. Thus far they were in the right, that what Christ said of himself amounted to this, that he was God, for he had said that he was one with the Father, and that he would give eternal life; and Christ doth not deny

deny it, which he would have done, if it had been a mistaken inference from his words.

But, 2. They were much mistaken, when they looked upon him as a mere man, and that the Godhead he claimed was an usurpation, and of his own making. They thought it absurd and impious that such a one as he who appeared in the fashion of a poor, mean, despicable man, should profess himself the Messiah, and intitle himself to the honours confessedly due to the Son of God. Note, (1.) Those who say that Jesus is a mere man, and only a made God, as the Socinians say, do in effect charge him with blasphemy, but do effectually prove it upon themselves. (2.) He who being a man, a sinful man, makes himself a god as the Pope doth, who claims divine powers and prerogatives, is no question, a blasphemer, and that anti-christ.

Sixthly, Christ's reply to their accusation of him (for so their vindication of themselves was) and his making good those claims which they imputed to him as blasphemies, ver. 34, &c. where he proves himself to be no blasphemer, by two arguments.

1. By an argument taken from God's word. He appeals to what was written in their law, i. e. in the Old Testament, whoever opposeth Christ, he is sure to have the scripture on his side. It is written, *Psal. lxxxii. 6. I have said ye are gods.* It is an argument *a minore ad majus*. If they were gods, much more am I. Observe,

(1.) How he explains the text, ver. 35. *He called them gods to whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken.* The word of God's commission came to them, appointing them to their offices, as judges, and therefore they are called gods, *Exod. xxii. 29.* To some the word of God came immediately, as to Moses: to others in the way of an instituted ordinance. Magistracy, is a divine institution: and magistrates are God's delegates, and therefore the scripture calleth them gods; and we are sure the scripture cannot be broken, or broken in upon, or found fault with. Every word of God is right, the very style and language of scripture is unexceptionable, and not to be corrected, *Matt. v. 18.*

(2.) How he applies it. Thus much in general is easily inferred, that they were very rash and unreasonable who condemned Christ as a blasphemer; only for calling himself the Son of God, when yet they themselves called their rulers so, and therein the scripture warranted them. But the argument goes further, ver. 36. If magistrates were called gods, because they were commissioned to administer justice in the nation, say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, thou blasphemest? We have here two things concerning the Lord Jesus.

1. The honour done by the Father, which he justly glories in, he sanctified him, and sent him into the world. Magistrates were called the sons of God, though the word of God only came to them, and the spirit of government came upon them by measures, as upon Saul; but our Lord Jesus was himself the Word, and had the Spirit without measure; they were constituted for a particular country, city or nation, but he was sent into the world, vested with a universal authority as Lord of all; they were sent to, as persons at a distance, he was sent forth as having been from eternity with God. The Father sanctified him, i. e. designed him, and set him apart to the office of mediator, and qualified and fitted him for that office: Sanctifying him is the same with sealing him, *John vi. 27.* Note, Whom the Father sends he sanctifies; whom he designs for holy purposes, he prepares with holy principles and dispositions: the holy God will reward, and therefore will employ none but such as he finds or makes holy. The Father's sanctifying and sending him in here vouched as a sufficient warrant for him calling himself the Son of God; for because he was a holy thing he was called the Son of God, *Luke i. 35. see Rom. i. 4.*

2. The dishonour done him by the Jews, which he justly complains of, that they imperiously said of him, whom the Father had thus dignified, that he was a blasphemer, because he called himself the Son of God. Say ye of him so and so; dare you say so? Dare you thus set your mouths against the heavens? Have you brow and brass enough to tell the God of truth he lies? or to condemn him that is most just; look me in the face and say it if you can; what, say ye of the Son of God that he is a blasphemer? If devils had said so of him, whom he came to condemn, it had not been so strange but that men should say so of him, whom he came to teach and save, he astonished, O heavens, at this! See what is the language of an obstinate unbelief, it doth in effect call the holy Jesus a blasphemer. It is hard to say, which is more to be admired, that men who breathe in God's air, should yet speak such things: or that men who have spoken such things should yet still be suffered to breathe in God's air. The wickedness in man, and the patience of God as it were, contend which shall be most wonderful.

By an argument taken from his own works, ver. 37, 38. In the former he only answered the charge of blasphemy by an argument *ad hominem*, but he here makes out his own claims, and proves that he and the Father are one, ver. 37, 38. *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.* Though he might justly have abandoned such blasphemous wretches as incurable, yet he vouchsafes to reason with them.

Observe, 1. From what he argues, from his works, which he had often vouched as his credentials, and the proofs of his mission. As he proved himself sent of God by the divinity of his works, so we must prove ourselves allied to Christ by the Christianity of ours. (1.) The argument is very cogent; for the works he did were the works of his Father, which the Father only could do, and which could not be done in the ordinary course of nature, but only by the sovereign over-ruling power of the God of nature. *Opera Deo propria; and Opera Deo digna.* The works of a divine power. He that can dispense with the laws of nature, repeal, alter, and over-rule them at his pleasure by his own power, is certainly the sovereign Prince who first instituted and enacted those laws. The miracles which the apostles wrought in his name and by his power, and for the confirmation of his doctrine, corroborated this argument, and continued the evidence of it when it was gone. (2.) It is very fairly proposed as can be desired, and put to a short issue.

(1.) *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.* He doth not demand a blind and implicit faith, nor an assent to his divine mission, further than he gave proof of it. He did not wind himself into the affections of people, nor weedle them by sly insinuations, nor impose upon their credulity by bold assertions, but with the greatest fairness imaginable quitted all demands of their faith, further than he produced warrants for these demands. Christ is no hard master, who expects to reap in assents, where he has not sown his arguments. None shall perish for the disbelief of that which was not proposed to them with sufficient motives of credibility, infinite wisdom itself being judge.

(2.) *But if I do the works of my Father; if I work undeniable miracles for the confirmation of a holy doctrine, though you believe not me, though you are so scrupulous as not to take my word, yet believe the works:* Believe your own eyes, your own reason, the thing speaks itself plain enough. As the invisible things of the Creator are clearly seen by his works of creation and common providence, *Rom. i. 20.* so the invisible things of the Redeemer were seen by his miracles, and by all his works both of power and

mercy; so that they who were not convinced by these works were without excuse.

2. For what he argues, that ye may know and believe, may believe it intelligently, and with an entire satisfaction, that the Father is in me, and I in him, which is the same with what he had said, ver. 30. *I and my Father are one.* The Father was so in the Son, as that in him dwell all the fulness of the Godhead, and it was by a divine power that he wrought his miracles; the Son was so in the Father, as that he was perfectly acquainted with the whole of his mind, not by communication but by consciousness, having laid in his bosom. This we must know; not know and explain; for we cannot by searching find it out to perfection, but know and believe it; acknowledging and adoring the depth when we cannot find the bottom.

39. Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand. 40. And went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode. 41. And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true. 42. And many believed on him there.

We have the issue of the conference with the Jews. One would have thought it should have convinced and melted them, but their hearts were hardened. Here we are told,

1. How they attacked him by force. Therefore they sought again to take him, ver. 39. Therefore, (1.) Because he had fully answered their charge of blasphemy, and wiped off that imputation, so that they could not for shame go on with their attempt to stone him, therefore they contrived to seize him, and to prosecute him as an offender against the state. When they were constrained to drop their attempt by a popular tumult, they would try what they could do under colour of a legal process. See *Rev. xii. 13.* Or, (2.) Because he persevered in the same testimony concerning himself, they persisted in their malice against him. What he had said before he did in effect say again, for the faithful witness never runs in from what he has once said; and therefore having the same provocation, they express the same resentments, and justify their attempt to stone him by another attempt to take him. Such is the temper of a persecuting spirit, and such its politics, *multa facta male factis tegere ne perpluant.*

2. How he avoided them by flight; not an inglorious retreat, in which there was any thing of human infirmity; but a glorious retirement, in which there was much of a divine power. He escaped out of their hands, not by the interposal of any friend that helped him, but by his own wisdom he got clear of them; either drew a veil over himself, or cast a mist before their eyes, or tied the hands of those whose hearts he did not turn. Note, No weapon formed against our Lord Jesus shall prosper, *Psal. ii. 5.* He escaped; not because he was afraid to suffer, but because his hour was not come. And he who knew how to deliver himself, no doubt knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to make a way for them to escape.

3. How he disposed of himself in his retirement, he went away again beyond Jordan, ver. 40. The bishop of our souls came not to be fixed in one see, but to go about from place to place doing good. This great benefactor was never out of his way, for wherever he came there was work to be done. Though Jerusalem was the royal city, yet he made many a kind visit to the country, not only to his own country Galilee, but to other parts, even those that lay most remote beyond Jordan. Now observe,

1. What shelter he found there. He went into a private part of the country, and there he abode, there he found some rest and quietness, when in Jerusalem he could find none. Note, Though persecutors may drive Christ and his gospel out of their own city or country, they cannot drive him or it out of the world. Though Jerusalem was not gathered, nor would be, yet Christ was glorious, and would be. Christ's now going beyond Jordan, was a figure of the taking of the kingdom of God from the Jews, and bringing it to the Gentiles. Christ and his gospel have often found better entertainment among the plain country people, than among the wise, the mighty, the noble, *1 Cor. i. 26, 27.*

2. What success he found there. He did not go thither merely for his own security, but to do good there; and therefore he chose to go thither where John at first baptized, *John i. 28.* because there could not but remain some impressions of John's ministry and baptism thereabouts, which would dispose them to receive Christ and his doctrine; for it was not three years since John was baptizing, and Christ was himself baptized here at Bethabara. Christ came hither now to see what fruit there was of all the pains John Baptist had taken among them, and what they retained of the things they then heard and received. And the event in some measure answered expectation; for we are told,

1. That they flocked after him, ver. 41. Many resorted to him. The return of the means of grace to a place after they have been for some time intermitted, commonly occasions a great stirring of affections. Some think Christ chose to abide in Bethabara, the house of passage, where the ferry-boat lay, by which they crossed the river Jordan, that the confluence of people thither might give an opportunity of teaching many who would come to hear him when it lay in their way, that would scarce go a step out of the road for an opportunity of attending on his word.

That they reasoned in his favour, and sought arguments to induce them to close with him as much as they at Jerusalem sought objections against him. They said very judiciously, *John did no miracle, but all things that John spake of this man were true.* Two things they considered upon recollecting what they had seen and heard from John, and comparing it with Christ's ministry.

(1.) That Christ far exceeded John Baptist's power, for John did no miracle, but Jesus doth many; whence it is easy to infer, that Jesus is greater than John. And if John were so great a prophet, how great then is this Jesus? Christ is best known and acknowledged by such a comparison with others, as sets him superlatively above others. Though John came in the spirit and power of Elias, yet he did not work miracles as Elias did; lest the minds of the people should be made to hesitate between him and Jesus; therefore the honour of working miracles was reserved for Jesus as a flower of his crown, that there might be a sensible demonstration, and an undeniable one that though he came after John, yet he was preferred far before him.

(2.) That Christ exactly answered John Baptist's testimony. John not only did no miracle to divert people from Christ, but he had said a great deal to direct them to Christ, and to turn them over as apprentices to him, and that came to their minds now; all things that John said of this man were true, that he should be the Lamb of God; should baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Great things John had said of him, which raised their expectations, so that though they had not zeal enough to carry them into his country to enquire after him, yet when he came into theirs, and brought his gospel

gospel to their doors, they acknowledged him as great as John had said he would be. When we get acquainted with Christ, and come to know him experimentally, we find all things that the scripture saith of him to be true; nay, and that the reality exceeds the report, 1 Kings x. 6, 7. John Baptist was now dead and gone, and yet his hearers profited by what they had heard formerly, and by comparing what they heard then with what they saw now, they gained a double advantage; for, (1.) They were confirmed in their belief that John was a prophet, who foretold such things, and spoke of the eminency to which this Jesus would arrive, though his beginning was so small. (2.) They were prepared to believe that Jesus was the Christ, in whom they saw those things accomplished, which John foretold. By this we see that the success and efficacy of the word preached, is not confined to the life of the preacher, nor doth it expire with his breath, but that which seemed as water spilt upon the ground, may afterwards be gathered up again. See Zech. i. 5, 6.

3. That many believed on him there. Believing that he who wrought such miracles, and in whom John's predictions were fulfilled, was what he declared himself to be, the Son of God, they gave up themselves to him as his disciples, ver. 42. An emphasis is here to be laid, (1.) Upon the persons that believed on him, they were many. While they that received and embraced his doctrine at Jerusalem were but as the grape-gleanings of the vintage, they that believed on him in the country beyond Jordan were a full harvest gathered in to him. (2.) Upon the place where this was, it was there where John had been preaching and baptizing, and had had great success, there many believed on the Lord Jesus. Where the preaching of the doctrine of repentance has had success as desired, there the preaching of the doctrine of reconciliation and gospel grace is most likely to be prosperous. Where John has been acceptable, Jesus will not be unacceptable. The jubilee trumpet sounds sweetest in the ears of those who in the day of atonement have afflicted their souls for sin.

CHAPTER XI.

In this chapter we have the history of that illustrious miracle which Christ wrought a little before his death, the raising of Lazarus to life; which is recorded only by this evangelist: for the other three confine themselves to what Christ did in Galilee, where he resided most, and scarce ever carried their history into Jerusalem till the passion week: whereas John's memoirs relate chiefly to what passed at Jerusalem; this passage therefore was reserved for his pen. Some suggest that when the other evangelists wrote, Lazarus was alive, and it would not well agree, either with his safety or with his humility to have it recorded till now, when it is supposed he was dead. It is more largely recorded than any other of Christ's miracles, yet not only because there are many circumstances of it so very instructive, and the miracle of itself so great a proof of Christ's mission, but because it was an earnest of that which was to be a crowning proof of all, Christ's own resurrection. Here is, (1.) The tidings sent to our Lord Jesus of the sickness of Lazarus, and his entertainment of those tidings, ver. 1—10. (2.) The visit he made Lazarus's relations when he had heard of his death, and their entertainment of his visit, ver. 17—32. (3.) The miracles wrought in the raising of Lazarus from the dead, ver. 33—44. (4.) The effect wrought by this miracle upon others, ver. 45—57.

1. NOW a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. 2. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) 3. Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, Behold him whom thou lovest is sick. 4. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. 5. Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister, and Lazarus. 6. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. 7. Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? 9. Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. 10. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth because there is no light in him. 11. These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. 12. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep he shall do well. 13. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of faking of rest in sleep. 14. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. 15. And I am glad for your sakes, that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. 16. Then said Thomas which is called Didymus unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

We have in these verses,

1. A particular account of the parties principally concerned in this story, ver. 1, 2. (2.) They lived at Bethany, a village not far from Jerusalem, where Christ usually lodged when he came up to the feasts. It is here called the town of Mary and Martha, i. e. the town where they dwelt, as Bethsaida is called the city of Andrew and Peter, John i. 44. for I see no reason to think, as some do, that Martha and Mary were owners of the town, and the rest were their tenants. (2.) Here was a brother named Lazarus; his Hebrew name probably was Eleazar, which being contracted, and a Greek termination put to it, is made Lazarus. Perhaps in prospect of this history our Saviour made use of the name of Lazarus in that parable, wherein he designed to set forth the blessedness of the righteous in the bosom of Abraham immediately after death, Luke xvi. 20. (3.) Here were two sisters, Martha and Mary, who seem to have been the housekeepers and to have managed the affairs of the family, while perhaps Lazarus lived a retired

life, and gave himself to study and contemplation. Here was a decent, happy, well ordered family, and a family that Christ was very much conversant in, where yet there was neither husband nor wife, (for ought appears) but the house kept by a brother, and his sisters dwelling together in unity. (4.) One of the sisters is particularly described to be that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, ver. 2. some think it is that woman that we read of, Luke vii. 37, 38. who had been a sinner, an ill woman: I rather think it refers to that anointing of Christ which this evangelist relates, chap. xii. 3. for the evangelists do never refer one to another, but John frequently refers in one place of his gospel to another. Extraordinary acts of piety and devotion that come from an honest principle of love to Christ will not only find acceptance with him, but gain reputation in the church, Matt. xxvi. 13. This was she whose brother Lazarus was sick; and the sickness of those we love is our affliction. The more friends we have, the more frequently we are thus afflicted by sympathy; and the dearer they are, the more grievous it is. The multiplying of our comforts is but the multiplying our cares and crosses.

2. The tidings that were sent to our Lord Jesus of the sickness of Lazarus, ver. 3. His sisters knew where Jesus was, a great way off beyond Jordan, and they sent a special messenger to him to acquaint him with the affliction of their family. In which they manifest, (1.) The affection and concern they had for their brother. Though it is likely his estate would come to them after his death, yet they earnestly desired his life as they ought to do. They shewed their love to him now he was sick, for a brother is born for adversity, and so is a sister too. We must weep with our friends when they weep, as well as rejoice with them when they rejoice. (2.) The regard they had to the Lord Jesus whom they were willing to make acquainted with all their concerns, and, like Jephthah, to utter all their words before him. Though God knows all our wants and griefs, and cares, he will know them from us, and is honoured by our laying them before him.

The message they sent was very short, not petitioning, much less prescribing or pressing, but barely relating the case with the tender insinuation of a powerful plea, Lord, behold him whom thou lovest is sick. They do not say, he whom we love, but whom thou lovest. Our greatest encouragements in prayer are fetched from God himself and from his grace. They do not say, Lord, behold him who loveth thee, but whom thou lovest; for herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us: our love to him is not worth speaking of, but his to us can never be enough spoken of. Note, 1. There are some of the friends and followers of the Lord Jesus whom he hath a special kindness for above others. Among the twelve, there was one whom Jesus loved. 2. It is no new thing for those whom Christ loves to be sick, all things come alike to all; bodily distempers correct the corruption, and try the graces of God's people. 3. It is a great comfort to us when we are sick to have those about us that will pray for us. 4. We have great encouragement in our prayers for those that are sick, if we have ground to hope that they are such as Christ loves; and we have reason to love and pray for those whom we have reason to think Christ loves and cares for.

3. An account how Christ entertained the tidings brought him of the illness of his friend.

1. He prognosticated the event and issue of the sickness, and probably sent it as a message to the sisters of Lazarus by the express, to support them while he delayed to come to them. Two things he prognosticates,

(1.) This sickness is not unto death; it was mortal, proved fatal, and no doubt but Lazarus was truly dead for four days. But, (1.) That was not the errand upon which this sickness was sent; it came not as in a common case to be a summons to the grave, but there was a further intention in it. Had it been sent on that errand, his rising from the dead would have defeated it. (2.) That was not the final effect of this sickness. He died, and yet it might be said, he did not die, for factum non dicitur quod non perseverat. Death is an everlasting farewell to this world, it is the way whence we shall not return; and in this sense it was not unto death. The grave was not his long home, his house of eternity. Thus Christ said of the maid, whom he purposed to restore to life. She is not dead. The sickness of good people, how threatening soever, is not unto death, for it is not to eternal death. The body's death to this world is the soul's birth into another world; when we or our friends are sick, we make it our principal support, that there is hope of a recovery, but in that we may be disappointed; therefore it is our wisdom to build upon that in which we cannot be disappointed; if they belong to Christ, let the worst come to the worst, they cannot be hurt of the second death, and then not much hurt of the first.

(2.) But it is for the glory of God, that an opportunity may be given for the manifesting of God's glorious power. The afflictions of the saints are designed for the glory of God, that he may have an opportunity of shewing them favour, for the sweetest mercies, and the most affecting are those which are occasioned by trouble. Let this reconcile us to the darkest dispensations of providence, they are all of the glory of God, this sickness, this loss, this disappointment is so, and if God be glorified, we ought to be satisfied, Lev. x. 3. It was for the glory of God, for it was that the Son of God might be glorified thereby, as it gave him occasion to work that glorious miracle, the raising him from the dead. As before the man was born blind, that Christ might have the honour of curing him, John ix. 3. so Lazarus must be sick and die, that Christ may be glorified as the Lord of life. Let this comfort those whom Christ loves under all their grievances, that the design of them all is, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby, his wisdom, power, and goodness, glorified in supporting and relieving them; see 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10.

2. He deferred visiting his patient, ver. 5, 6. They had pleaded Lord, it is he whom thou lovest, and the plea is allowed, ver. 5. Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. Thus the claims of faith are ratified in the court of heaven: Now one would think that would follow, when he heard therefore that he was sick, he made all the haste that he could to him; if he loved them, now was a time to shew it by hastening to them, for he knew they impatiently expected him. But he took the contrary way to shew his love; it is said he loved them, and yet he lingered, but he loved them, and therefore he lingered; when he heard his friend was sick, instead of coming post to him, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. (1.) He loved them, i. e. had a great opinion of the Martha and Mary, of their wisdom and grace, of their faith and patience above others of his disciples, and therefore he deferred coming to them, that he might try them, that their trial might at last be found to praise and honour. (2.) He loved them, i. e. he designed to do something great and extraordinary for them, to work such a miracle for their relief, as he had not wrought for any of his friends; and therefore he delayed coming to them, that Lazarus might be dead and buried before he came. If Christ had come presently and cured the sickness of Lazarus, he had done no more than he did for many; if he had raised him to life when newly dead; no more than he had done for some; but deferring his relief so long, he had an opportunity of doing more for him than for any. Note, God hath gracious intentions even in seeming delays; Isa. lix. 7, 8—xlv. 14. Christ's friends at Bethany were not out of his thoughts, though when he heard of their distress, he made no haste to him. When the work of deliverance, temporal or spiritual, public, or personal,

stands at a stay, it doth but stay the time, and every thing is beautiful in its season.

4. The discourse he had with his disciples, when he was about to go visit his friends at Bethany, ver. 7—16. And the conference is so very free and familiar as to make out what Christ saith, *I called ye friends.*

Two things he discourses about, his own danger, and Lazarus's death.

First, his own danger in going into Judea, ver. 7—10.

1. Here is the notice which Christ gave his disciples of his purpose to go into Judea towards Jerusalem. His disciples were the men of his counsel, and unto them he saith, ver. 7. *Let us go into Judea again*, though they there are unworthy of such a favour. Thus Christ repeats the tenders of his mercy to those that have often rejected them. Now this may be considered, (1.) As a purpose of his kindness to his friends in Bethany, whose affliction, and all the aggravating circumstances of it he knew very well, though no more expresses were sent to him, for he was present in spirit, though absent in body. When he knew they were brought to the last extremity, when the brothers and sisters have given and taken a last farewell; now saith he, let us go to Judea: Christ will arise in favour of his people, when the time to favour them, yea, the set time is come, and the worst time is commonly the set time. When our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts, then they shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened the graves, Ezek. xxxvii. 11—13. In the depths of affliction, let this therefore keep us out of the depths of despair, that man's extremity is God's opportunity, *Schorah-jireh*. Or, (2.) As a trial of the courage of the disciples, whether they would venture to follow him thither, where they had been so lately frightened with an attempt upon their Master's life, which they looked upon as an attempt upon theirs too. To go to Judea, which was so lately made too hot for them, was a saying that proved them. But Christ did not say, *Go ye into Judea*, and I will stay and take shelter here: no, *Let us go*. Note, Christ never brings his people into any peril but he accompanies them in it; and is with them, even with them when they walk through the shadow of the valley of death.

2. Their objection against this journey, ver. 18. *Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?* Here, 1. They mind him of the danger he had been in there not long since. Christ's disciples are apt to make a greater matter of sufferings than their Master doth and to remember injuries longer. He had put up the affront, it was over and gone, and forgotten, but his disciples could not forget it: *Of late, yea*, now, as if it were this very day they sought to stone thee. Though it was at least two months ago, the remembrance of the fright was fresh in their minds. 2. They marvel he will go thither again. Wilt thou favour those with thy presence, they have expelled thee out of their coasts? Christ's ways in passing by offences are above our ways. Wilt thou expose thyself among a people that are so desperately enraged against thee? *Goest thou thither again*, where thou hast been so ill used? Here they shewed great care for their Master's safety, as Peter did, when he said, *Master, spare thyself*; had Christ been minded to shift off suffering, he did not want friends to persuade him to it; but he had opened his mouth to the Lord, and he would not, he could not go back. Yet while the disciples shew a concern for his safety, they discover at the same time, (1.) A distrust of his power, as if he could not secure both himself and them now in Judea, as well as he had done formerly. Is his arm waxen short? When we are solicitous for the interests of Christ's church and kingdom in this world, yet we must rest satisfied in the wisdom and power of the Lord Jesus, who knows how to secure a flock of sheep in the midst of a herd of wolves. (2.) A secret fear of suffering themselves, for they count upon that if he suffer. When our own private interests happen to run in the same channel with the public, we are apt to think ourselves zealous for the Lord of hosts, when really we are only jealous for our own wealth, credit, ease, and safety; and seek our own things, under colour and umbrage of seeking the things of Christ, we have therefore need nicely to distinguish upon our principles.

3. Christ's answer to this objection, ver. 9, 10. *Are there not twelve hours in the day?* The Jews divided every day into twelve hours, and made their hours longer or shorter, according as the days were, so that an hour with them was a twelfth part of the time between sun and sun; so some. Or, they lying much more south than we, their days were nearer twelve hours long than ours. The divine providence has given us day-light to work by, and lengthens it out to a competent time; and reckoning the year round, every country has just as much day-light as night, and so much more as the twilight amounts to. Man's life is a day, this day is divided into divers ages, states, and opportunities, as into hours shorter or longer, as God has appointed; the consideration of this should make us not only very busy, as to the work of life, if there were twelve hours in the day, each of them ought to be filled up with duty, and none of them trifled away, but also very easy as to the perils of life; our day shall be lengthened out till our work be done, and our testimony finished. This Christ applies to his case, and shews why he must go to Judea, because he had a clear call to go. For the opening of this,

1. He shews the comfort and satisfaction which a man has in his own mind while he keeps in the way of his duty, as it is in general prescribed by the word of God, and particularly determined by the providence of God. *If any man walk in the day, he stumbles not*; that is, if a man keeps close to his duty, and minds that, and sets the will of God before him as his rule, with an impartial respect to all God's commandments, he does not hesitate in his own mind, but walking uprightly, walks surely, and with a holy confidence. As he that walks in the day stumbles not, but goes on steadily and cheerfully in his way, because he sees the light of this world, and by it sees his way before him; so a good man without any collateral security or sinister aims, relies upon the word of God as his rule, and regards the glory of God as his end, because he sees those two great lights, and keeps his eye upon them, he is furnished with a faithful guide in all his doubts, and a powerful guard in all his dangers, Gal. vi. 4. Psal. cxix. 6. Christ, wherever he went, walked in the day, and so shall we if we follow his steps.

2. He shews the pain and peril a man is in, who walks not according to this rule, ver. 10. *If a man walk in the night he stumbles*. If a man walk in the way of his heart and the sight of his eyes, and according to the course of this world, if he consult his own carnal reasonings more than the will and glory of God, he falls into temptations and snares, is liable to great uneasinesses and frightful apprehensions; trembles at the shaking of a leaf, and flees when none pursues: while an upright man laughs at the shaking of a spear, and stands undaunted when ten thousand invade. See Psal. xxxiii. 14, 15, 16. He stumbles, because there is no light in him, for light in us is that to our moral actions, which light about us is to our natural actions. He has not a good principle within; he is not sincere, his eye is evil. Thus Christ not only justifies his purpose of going into Judea, but encourageth his disciples to go along with him and fear no evil.

Secondly, The death of Lazarus is here discoursed of between Christ and his disciples, ver. 11—16. Where we have,

1. The notice Christ gave his disciples of the death of Lazarus, and an intimation that his business into Judea was to look after him, ver. 11. After he had prepared his disciples for this dangerous march into an enemy's country, he then gives them,

1. Plain intelligence of the death of Lazarus, though he had received no advice of it, *Our friend Lazarus sleepeth*. See here how Christ calls a believer, and a believer's death. 1. He calls a believer his friend; *Our friend Lazarus*. Note, (1.) There is a covenant of friendship between Christ and believers, and a friendly affection and communion pursuant to it, which our Lord Jesus will own and not be ashamed of. *His secret is with the righteous*. (2.) Those whom Christ is pleased to own as his friends, all his disciples should take for theirs. Christ speaks of Lazarus as their common friend: *Our friend*. (3.) Death itself doth not break the bond of friendship between Christ and a believer. Lazarus is dead, and yet he is still *our friend*. 2. He calls the death of a believer a sleep, *he sleepeth*. It is good to call death by such names and titles, as will help to make it more familiar and less formidable to us. The death of Lazarus was in a peculiar sense a sleep, as that of Jairus's daughter, because they were to be raised again speedily, and since we are sure to rise again at last, why should that make any great difference? And why should not the believing hope of that resurrection to eternal life, make it upon this matter as easy to us to put off the body and die, as it is to put off our clothes and go to sleep? A good Christian when he dies doth but sleep: he rests from the labours of the day past, and is refreshing himself for the next morning. Nay, herein death has the advantage of sleep, that sleep is only the parenthesis, but death is the period of our cares and toils. The soul doth not sleep, but becomes more active; but the body sleeps without any toss, without any terror; nor distempered nor disturbed. The grave to the wicked is a prison, and his grave-clothes as the shackles of a criminal reserved for execution; but to the godly it is a bed, and all its bands as the soft and downy fetters of an easy quiet sleep. Though the body corrupt, it will rise in the morning as if it had never seen corruption; it is but putting off our clothes to be mended and trimmed up for the marriage day, the coronation day to which we must rise. See Isa. lvii. 2. 1 Thess. iv. 14. The Greeks called their burying places, *dormitories*, κοιμητήρια.

2. Particular intimations of his favourable intentions concerning Lazarus; but I go, that I may wake him out of sleep. He could have done it and yet have staid where he was; he that recovered at a distance one dying, John iv. 50. could have raised at a distance one dead; but he would put this honour upon the miracle to work it by the grave side, *I go to wake him*. As sleep is a resemblance of death, so a man's waking out of sleep when he is called, especially when he is called by his own name, is an emblem of the resurrection, Job xiv. 14. *Then shalt thou call*. Christ had no sooner said our friend sleeps, but presently he adds, *I go that I may wake him*. When Christ tells his people at any time how bad the case is, he lets them know in the same breath how easily, how quickly he can mend it. Christ's telling his disciples that this was his business to Judea, might help to take off their fear of going with him thither; he did not go upon a public errand to the temple, but a private visit, which could not so much expose him and them; and besides, it was to do a kindness to a family they were all obliged to.

2. Their mistake of the meaning of this notice, and the blunder they made about it, ver. 12, 13. They said Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. This speaks,

(1.) Some concern they had for their friend Lazarus, they hoped he would recover: *οὐκ ἔστιν*. He shall be saved from dying at this time. Probably they had understood by the messenger who brought the news of his illness, that one of the most threatening symptoms he was under was, that he was restless and could get no sleep; and now they heard he slept they concluded the fever was going off, and the worst was past. Sleep is often nature's physic, and reviving to its weak and weary powers. This is true of the sleep of death; if a good Christian so sleep, he shall do well, better than he did here.

(2.) Yet it speaks a greater concern for themselves, for hereby they insinuate that it was now needless for him to go to him, and expose himself and them. If he sleep he will be quickly well, and we may stay where we are. Thus we are willing to hope that good work which we are called to do will do itself, or will be done by some other hand, if there be peril in the doing of it.

This mistake of theirs is here rectified, ver. 13. *Jesus spake of this death*. See here, 1. How dull of understanding Christ's disciples as yet were. Let us not therefore condemn all those for heretics who mistake the sense of some of Christ's sayings. It is not good to aggravate our brethren's mistakes, yet this was a gross one; for it had easily been prevented, if they had remembered how frequently death is called a sleep in the Old Testament. They should have understood Christ when he spoke scripture language. Besides, it would sound odd for their Master to undertake a journey of two or three days only to awake a friend out of a natural sleep, which any one else might awake him out of. What Christ undertakes to do, we may be sure is something great and uncommon, and a work worthy of himself. 2. How carefully the evangelist corrects this error, *Jesus spake of his death*. Those that speak in an unknown tongue or use similitudes, should learn hence to explain themselves, and pray that they may interpret to prevent mistakes.

3. The plain and express declaration which Jesus made to them of the death of Lazarus, and his resolution to go to Bethany, ver. 14, 15.

(1.) He gives them notice of the death of Lazarus, what he had before said darkly, he now saith plainly, and without a figure, *Lazarus is dead*, ver. 14. Christ takes cognizance of the death of his saints, for it is precious in his sight, Paul. cxvi. 15. and is not pleased if we do not consider it and lay it to heart. See what a compassionate teacher Christ is, and how he condescends to those that are out of the way; and by his subsequent sayings and doings explains the difficulties of what went before.

(2.) He gives them the reason, why he had delayed so long to go and see him, *I am glad for your sakes that I was not there*. If he had been there time enough he would have healed his disease, and prevented his death, which would have been much for the comfort of Lazarus's friends; but then his disciples would have seen no further proof of his power than what they had often seen, and consequently their faith had received no improvement; but now he went and raised him from the dead, as there were many brought to believe on him who before did not, ver. 45. so there was much done towards the perfecting of what was lacking in the faith of those that did, which Christ aimed at; *to the intent that ye may believe*.

(3.) He resolves now to go to Bethany, and take his disciples along with him: *Let us go unto him*. Now let us go to his sisters to comfort them, which is the utmost we can do, but let us go to him; for Christ can shew wonders to the dead. Death which will separate us from all our other friends, and cut us off from correspondence with them, yet cannot separate us from the love of Christ, nor put us out of the reach of his calls; as he will maintain his covenant with the dust, so he can make visits to the dust. *Lazarus is dead*, but let us go to him; though perhaps those who said, if he sleep, there is no need to go, were ready to say, if he be dead, it is to no purpose to go.

4. Thomas exciting his fellow disciples cheerfully to attend their Master's motions, ver. 16, *Thomas, which is called Didymus*. Thomas in Hebrew, and Didymus in Greek, signify a twin; it is said of Rebekah, Gen. xxv. 24. that there were twins in her womb. The word is *Thomin*, probably Thomas

Thomas was a *twin*, he said to his fellow disciples, who probably looked with fear and concern upon one another, when Christ had said so positively, *Let us go to him*; he said very courageously, *Let us also go, that we may die with him*. With him; that is,

1. With Lazarus, who was now dead; so some take it. Lazarus was a dear and loving friend both to Christ and his disciples, and perhaps Thomas had a particular intimacy with him. Now if he be dead, saith he, *Let us even go and die with him*. For (1.) If we survive we know not how to live without him. Probably Lazarus had done them many good offices, sheltered them and provided for them, and had been to them *instead of eyes*; and now he was gone, they had *no man like-minded*, and therefore, saith he, we had as good die with him. Thus we are sometimes ready to think our lives bound up in the lives of some that were dear to us; but God will teach us to live, and to live comfortably upon himself, when those are gone whom we thought we could not have lived without. But that is not all. (2.) If we die, we hope to be *happy with him*. Such a firm belief he has of the happiness on the other side death, and such good hope through grace of their own and Lazarus's interest in it, that he is willing they should all go and die with him. It is better die, and go along with our Christian friends to that world which is enriched by their removal to it, than stay behind in a world that is impoverished by their departure out of it. The more of our friends are translated hence, the fewer cords we have to bind us to this earth, and the more to draw our hearts heaven-wards. How pleasantly doth the good man speak of dying, as if he were but *undressing and going to bed*.

2. Let us go and die with our Master, who is now exposing himself to death, by venturing into Judea; and so I rather think it is meant. If he will go into danger, let us also go and take our lot with him; according to the command we received, *follow me*. Thomas knew so much of the malice of the Jews against him, and the counsels of God concerning him, which he had often told them of, that it was no foreign supposition that he was now going to die. And now Thomas discovers, (1.) A gracious readiness to die with Christ himself, flowing from strong affections to him, though his faith was weak, as appeared afterwards, chap. xiv. 5.—xx. 25. *Where thou diest, I will die*, Ruth i. 17. (2.) A zealous desire to help his fellow-disciples into the same frame, *Let us go, one and all, and die with him*: if they stone him, let them stone us; who would desire to survive such a master? Thus in difficult times, Christians should animate one another. We may each of us say, *Let us die with him*. Note, The consideration of the dying of the Lord Jesus should make us willing to die whenever God calls us.

17. ¶ Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already. 18. (Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:) 19. And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. 20. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him, but Mary sat still in the house. 21. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. 22. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. 23. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. 24. Martha said unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. 25. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; 26. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? 27. She saith unto him, Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. 28. And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. 29. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. 30. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. 31. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. 32. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

The matter being determined that Christ will go to Judea, and his disciples with him, they address themselves to their journey; and in this journey some passages happened, which the other evangelists record, as the healing of the blind man at Jericho, and the conversion of Zaccheus. We must not reckon ourselves out of our way, while we are in the way of doing good; nor be so intent upon one good office as to neglect another.

At length he comes near to Bethany, which is said to be about fifteen furlongs off from Jerusalem, about two measured miles, ver. 18. Notice is taken of this, that this miracle was in effect wrought in Jerusalem, and so was put to her score. Christ's miracles in Galilee were more numerous, but those in or near Jerusalem were more illustrious; there he healed one that had been diseased thirty-eight years, another that had been blind from his birth, and raised one that had been dead four days. To Bethany Christ came, and observe,

First, What posture he found his friends there in. When he had been last with them, it is likely he left them well, in health and joy; but when we part from our friends (though Christ knows) we know not what changes may be concerning us from them before we meet again,

1. He found his friend Lazarus in the grave, ver. 17. When he came near the town, probably by the burying-place belonging to the town, he was told by the neighbours, or some he met, that Lazarus had been four days buried. Some think Lazarus died the same day that the messenger came to Jesus with the tidings of his sickness, and so reckon two days for his abode in the same place, and two days for his journey. I rather think that Lazarus died at that very instant that Jesus said, *Our friend sleepeth*, he is now newly fallen asleep; and the time between his death and burial (which among the Jews was but short,) with the four days of

his lying in the grave were taken up in this journey: for Christ travelled publicly, as appears by his passing through Jericho, and his abode at Zaccheus's house took up some time. Promised salvations, though they always come surely, yet they often come slowly.

2. He found his friends that survived in grief. Martha and Mary were almost swallowed up with sorrow for the death of their brother, which is intimated where it is said, that many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them. Note, 1. Ordinarily, where death is there are mourners, especially when those that were agreeable and amiable to their relations and serviceable to their generation, are taken away. The house where death is, is called the house of mourning, Eccl. vii. 2. When man goes to his long home, the mourners go about the streets, Eccl. xii. 5. or rather sit alone, and keep silence. Here was Martha's house, a house where the fear of God was, and on which his blessing rested, yet made a house of mourning. Grace will keep sorrow from the heart, John xiv. 1. not from the house. 2. Where there are mourners there ought to be comforters. It is a duty we owe to those that are in sorrow to mourn with them, and to comfort them; and our mourning with them will be some comfort to them. When we are under the present impressions of grief, we are apt to forget those things which would minister comfort to us, and therefore have need of remembrancers: It is a mercy to have such when we are in sorrow, and our duty to be such to them who are in sorrow. The Jewish doctors laid great stress upon this obliging their disciples to make conscience of comforting the mourners after the burial of the dead. They comforted them concerning their brother, i. e. by speaking to them of him, not only of the good name he left behind, but the happy state he was gone to. When godly relations and friends are taken from us, whatever occasion we have to be afflicted concerning ourselves, who are left behind and miss them, we have reason to be comforted concerning them who are gone before us to a happiness where they have no miss of us.

This visit which the Jews made to Martha and Mary is an evidence that they were persons of distinction and made a figure; as also that they carried themselves obligingly to all, so that though they were followers of Christ, yet those that had no respect for him were civil to them. There was also a providence in it, that so many Jews, Jewish ladies, it is probable, should come together just at this time to comfort the mourners, that they might be unexceptionable witnesses of the miracles; and see what miserable comforters they were in comparison with Christ. Christ did not use to send for witnesses to his miracles, and yet if none were by but relations, it would have been excepted against, therefore God's counsel so ordered it, that those should come together accidentally to bear their testimony to it, that all infidelity might stop her mouth.

Secondly, What passed between him and his surviving friends at this interview. When Christ defers his visits for a time, they are thereby made the more acceptable, much the more welcome; so it was here: His departures endear his returns, and his absence teacheth us how to value his presence.

1. We have here the interview between him and Martha: she went and met him, ver. 20.

1. It should seem that Martha was earnestly expecting Christ's arrival, and enquiring for it; either she had sent out messengers to bring her tidings of his first approach, or she had so often asked, *Saw ye him whom my soul loveth*? That the first who discovered him ran to her with the welcome news. However it was, she heard of his coming before he was come. She had waited long, and often asked, *Is he come?* and could hear no tidings of him; but long looked for came at last: At the end the vision will speak, and not lie.

2. Martha, when the good news was brought that Jesus was coming, threw all aside, and went and met him, in token of a most affectionate welcome. She waved all ceremony and compliment to the Jews who came to visit her, and hastened to go and meet Jesus. Note, When God by his grace or providence is coming towards us in ways of mercy and comfort, we should go by faith, hope, and prayer, to meet him. Some suggest that Martha went out of the town to meet Jesus, to let him know that there were several Jews in the house who were no friends to him, that if he pleased he might keep out of the way of them.

3. When Martha went to meet Jesus, Mary sat still in the house. Some think she did not hear the tidings, being in her withdrawing-room receiving visits of condolence, while Martha, who was busy in the household-affairs, had early notice of it. Perhaps Martha would not tell her sister that Christ was coming, being ambitious of the honour of receiving him first. *Sancta est prudentia clam fratribus clam parentibus ad Christum sese conferre*. Maldonat. in locum. Others think she did hear that Christ was come, but was so overwhelmed with sorrow, that she did not care for stirring, choosing rather to indulge her sorrow, and to sit poring upon her affliction, and saying *I do well to mourn*. Comparing this story with that of Luke x. 38, 39. we may observe the different tempers of these two sisters, and the temptations and advantages of each: Martha's natural temper was active and busy, she loved to be here and there, and at the end of every thing, and this had been a snare to her, when by it she was not only careful and cumbered about many things, but hindered from the exercises of devotion; but now in a day of affliction this active temper did her a kindness, kept the grief from her heart, and made her forward to meet Christ, and so she received comfort from him the sooner. On the other hand, Mary's natural temper was contemplative and reserved: this had been formerly an advantage to her, when it set her at Christ's feet to hear his word, and enabled her there to attend upon him without those distractions which Martha was cumbered with: but now in the day of affliction that same temper proved a snare to her, and made her less able to grapple with her grief; and disposed her to melancholy; but Mary sat still in the house. See here how much it will be our wisdom carefully to watch against the temptations, and improve the advantages of our natural temper.

Here is fully related the discourse between Christ and Martha.

First, Martha's address to Christ, ver. 21, 22.

1. She complains of Christ's long absence and delay. She said it not only with grief for the death of her brother, but some resentment of the seeming unkindness of the Master; *Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died*. Here is, 1. Some evidence of faith. She believed Christ's power, that though her brother's sickness was very grievous, yet he could have cured it, and so have prevented his death; she believed his pity, that if he had but seen Lazarus in his extreme illness, and his dear relations all in tears about him, he would have had compassion, and have prevented so sad a breach, for his compassions fail not. But, 2. Here are sad instances of unbelief. Her faith was true, but weak as a bruised reed, for she limits the power of Christ, in saying, *If thou hadst been here*; whereas she ought to have known that Christ could cure at a distance, and his gracious operations are not limited to his bodily presence. She reflects likewise upon the wisdom and kindness of Christ that he did not hasten to them when they sent for him, as if he had not timed his business well, and now might as good have staid away, and not have come at all as to come too late; and as for any help now she can scarce entertain the thought of it.

2. Yet she corrects and comforts herself with the thoughts of the prevailing

ing interest Christ had in heaven, however she blames herself for blaming her Master, and for suggesting that he comes too late, for *I know that even now, as desperate as the case is, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.* Observe, 1. How willing her hope was. Though she has not courage to ask of Jesus that he should raise him to life again, there having been no precedent as yet of any one raised to life that had been so long dead, yet, like a modest petitioner, she humbly recommends the case to the wise and compassionate consideration of the Lord Jesus. When we know what in particular to ask or expect, let us in general refer ourselves to God, let him do as seemeth him good. *Judicii tui est, non presumptionis mea.* Aug. in locum. When we know not what to pray for, it is our comfort that the great intercessor knows what to ask for us, and is always heard. 2. How weak her faith was. She should have said, Lord, thou canst do whatsoever thou wilt, but she only saith, Thou canst obtain whatever thou prayest for; she had forgot that the Son has life in himself, that he wrought miracles by his own power. Yet both these considerations must be taken for the encouragement of our faith and hope, and neither excluded; the dominion Christ has on earth, and his interest and intercession in heaven: he has in the one hand the golden sceptre, and in the other the golden censer; his power always predominant, his intercessions always prevalent.

Secondly, The comfortable word which Christ gave to Martha, in answer to her pathetic address, ver. 23. *Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.* Martha in her complaint looked back, reflecting with regret, that Christ was not there, for then, thinks she, my brother had been now alive: we are apt, in such cases, to add to our own trouble, by fancying what might have been. If such a method had been taken, such a physician employed; my friend had not died, which is more than we know; but what good doth this do, when God's will is done, and our business is to submit to him: but Christ directs Martha, and us in her to look forwards, and to think what shall be, for that is a certainty and yields sure comfort; *Thy brother shall rise again.*

1. This was true of Lazarus in a sense peculiar to him; he was now presently to be raised, but Christ speaks of it in general, as a thing to be done, not which he himself would do, so humbly did our Lord Jesus speak of what he did. He also expressed it *ambiguously*, leaving her uncertain at first, whether he would raise him presently or not till the last day, that he might try her faith and patience.

2. It is applicable to all the saints, and their resurrection at the last day. Note, It is a matter of comfort to us when we have buried our godly friends and relations, to think that they should *rise again*. As the soul at death is not lost, but *gone before*, so the body is not lost but *laid up*. Think you hear Christ saying, thy parent, thy child, thy yoke-fellow shall rise again; *these dry bones shall live.*

Thirdly, The faith which Martha mixed with this word, and the unbelief mixed with this faith, ver. 24.

1. She accounted it a faithful saying that he should rise again at the last day. Though the doctrine of the resurrection was to have its full proof from Christ's resurrection, yet as it was already revealed, she firmly believed it, Acts xxiv. 15. (1.) That there shall be a *last day*, with which all the days of time shall be numbered and finished. (2.) That there shall be a *general resurrection* at that day, when the earth and sea shall give up their dead. (3.) There shall be a *particular resurrection* of each one. I know that I shall rise again, and this and the other relation that was dear to me. As bone shall return to his bone in that day, so friend to his friend.

2. Yet she seems to think this saying not so well worthy of all acceptance as really it was. *I know he shall rise again at the last day*, but what are we the better for that now? As if the comforts of the resurrection to eternal life were not worth speaking of, or yielded not satisfaction sufficient to balance her affliction. See our weakness and folly, that we suffer present sensible things to make a deeper impression upon us, both of grief and joy, than those things which are the objects of faith, *I know that he shall rise again at the last day*; and is not that enough? She seems not to think it is. Thus by our discontent under present crosses, we greatly undervalue our future hopes, and put a slight upon them, as if not worth regarding.

Fourthly, the further instruction and encouragement which Jesus Christ gave her; for he will not quench the smouldering flax, nor break the bruised reed. He said to her, *I am the resurrection and the life*, ver. 25, 26. Two things Christ possesseth her with the belief of, in reference to the present distress, and they are the things which our faith should fasten upon in the like cases.

1. The power of Christ, his sovereign power: *I am the resurrection and the life*, the fountain of life, and the head and author of the resurrection. Martha believed that at his prayer God would give any thing; but he would have her know that by his word he could work any thing. Martha believed a resurrection at the last day. Christ tells her that he had that power lodged in his own hand, that the dead were to *hear his voice*, John v. 25. whence it was easy to infer, he that could raise a world of men that had been dead many ages, could doubtless raise one man that had been dead but four days. Note, It is an unspeakable comfort to all good Christians that Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life, and will be so to them. Resurrection is a return to life, Christ is the author of that return, and of that life to which it is a return. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come, and Christ is both; the author and principle of both, and the ground of our hope of both.

2. The promises of the new covenant, which give us further ground of hope that we shall live. Observe,

1. To whom those promises are made, to them that believe in Jesus Christ, to them that consent to, and confide in Jesus Christ as the only Mediator of reconciliation and communion between God and man: that receive the record God has given in his word concerning his Son, sincerely comply with it, and answer all the great intentions of it. The condition of the latter promise is thus expressed, *Whosoever liveth and believeth on me*, which may be understood, either, 1. Of natural life, *whosoever lives in this world*, whether he be Jew or Gentile, wherever he lives, if he believes in Christ, he shall live by him. Yet it limits the time, whoever, during life, while he is here in this state of probation, *believes in me*, shall be happy in me, but after death it will be too late; *whoever lives and believes*, i. e. lives by faith, Gal. ii. 20. has a faith that influences his conversation. Or, 2. Of spiritual life: He that *lives and believes*, is he that by faith is born again to a heavenly and divine life, to whom to *live is Christ*, that makes Christ the life of his soul.

2. What the promises are, ver. 25. *Though he die, yet shall he live*, nay, ver. 26. *He shall never die.* Man consists of body and soul, and provision is made for the happiness of both.

1. For the body, here is a promise of a *blessed resurrection*. Though the body be dead because of sin, there is no remedy but it will die, yet it shall *live again*, though he were dead. All the difficulties that attend the state of the dead are here overlooked, and made nothing of. Though the sentence of death was just, though the effects of death be dismal, though the bands of death be strong, though he be dead and buried, dead and putrified; though the scattered dust be so mixed with common dust that no art of man

can distinguish, much less separate them, put the case as strong as you will on that side, yet we are sure *he shall live again*; the body shall be raised a glorious body.

2. For the soul here is the promise of a *blessed immortality*. He that *liveth and believeth*, who being united to Christ by faith, lives spiritually by virtue of that union, he shall *never die*: That spiritual life shall never be extinguished, but perfected in eternal life. As the soul being in its nature *spiritual*, is therefore *immortal*: so if by faith it live a *spiritual* life, consonant to its nature, its felicity shall be immortal too. It shall *never die*, shall never be otherwise but easy and happy, and there is not any intermission or interruption of its life, as there is of the life of the body: The *immortality* of the body shall at length be *swallowed up of life*, but the life of the soul, the believing soul, shall be immediately at death swallowed up of immortality. *He shall not die, i. e. $\tau\omicron\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\alpha\iota$, for ever.* Non morietur in aeternum, so Cyprian quotes it. The body shall not be for ever dead in the grave, it dies (like the two witnesses) but for a time, times, and the dividing of time; and when time shall be no more, and all the divisions of it shall be numbered and finished, a *spirit of life from God shall enter into it*. But that is not all, the soul shall not die that death which is for ever, shall not die eternally. *Blessed and holy*, that is, blessed and happy is he, that by faith has part in the first resurrection, has part in Christ who is that resurrection: for on such the second death, which is a death for ever, shall have no power, see John vi. 40.

Christ asks her, *believest thou this?* Canst thou assent to it with application? Canst thou take my word for it? Note, When we have read or heard the word of Christ concerning the great things of the other world, we should seriously put it to ourselves, *Do we believe this?* This truth in particular, *this* which is attended with so many difficulties, *this* which is suited to my case? Doth my belief of it realize it to me, and give my soul an assurance of it; So that I can say, not only *this*, I believe, but *thus*, I believe it. Martha was doting upon her brother's being raised to life in this world, before Christ gave her hopes of that, he directed her thoughts to another life, another world; no matter for that, but *believest thou this* that I tell thee concerning the future state? The crosses and comforts of this present time would not make that impression upon us that they do, if we did but believe the things of eternity as we ought.

Fifthly, Martha's unfeigned assent yielded to what Christ said, ver. 27. We have here Martha's creed, the good confession she witnessed, the same with that for which Peter was commended, Matt. xvi. 16, 17. and it is the conclusion of the whole matter.

1. Here is the *guide of her faith*, and that is, the word of Christ; without any alteration, exception, or proviso, she takes it entire as Christ had said it, *Yea, Lord*, whereby she subscribes to the truth of all and every part of that which Christ had promised, in his own sense; *even so*. Faith is an echo to divine revelation, returns the same words, and resolves to abide by them; *yea, Lord, as the word did make it, so I believe and take it*, said queen Elisabeth.

2. The ground of her faith, and that is, the authority of Christ; she therefore believes *this*, because she believes that he who saith it is Christ. She has recourse to the foundation for the support of the superstructure, *I believe, $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\iota\kappa\omega\varsigma$, I have believed*, that thou art Christ, and therefore, *I do believe this*. Observe here,

(1.) What she believed and confessed concerning Jesus; three things all to the same effect. (1.) That he was the *Christ*, or Messiah promised and expected under this name and notion, the *anointed One*. (2.) That he was the *Son of God*, so the Messiah was called, Psalm ii. 7. not by office only, but by nature. (3.) That he was *he which should come* into the world, the *ἀρχιμωυ*, that blessing of blessings which the church had for many ages waited for as future, she embraced as present.

(2.) What she inferred hence, and what she alledged this for; if she admits this, that Jesus is the Christ, there is no difficulty in believing that he is the resurrection and the life, for if he be the Christ, then, (1.) He is the fountain of light and truth, and we may take all his sayings for faithful and divine upon his own word: If he be the Christ, he is that prophet whom we are to hear in all things. (2.) He is the fountain of life and blessedness, and we may therefore depend upon his ability as well as upon his veracity. How shall bodies turned to dust *live again*? How shall souls clogged and clouded as ours are *live for ever*? We could not believe this, but that we believe him that undertakes it to be the Son of God, who has life in himself, and has it for us.

2. We have here the interview between Christ and Mary the other sister. And there observe,

1. The notice which Martha gave her of Christ's coming, ver. 28. *When she had so said*, as one that needed to say no more, *she went her way*, easy in her mind, and called Mary her sister. (1.) Martha having received instruction and comfort from Christ herself, called her sister to share with her. Time was when Martha would have drawn Mary from Christ to come and help her in much serving, Luke x. 40. but to make her amends for that, here she is industrious to draw her to Christ. (2.) She called her *secretly*, and whispered it in her ear, because there was company by, Jews that were no friends to Christ. The saints are called into the fellowship of Jesus Christ, by an invitation that is secret and distinguishing, given to them, and not to others; they have meat to eat that the world knows not of, joy that a stranger doth not intermeddle with. (3.) She called her by order from Christ, he bid her, *Go call her sister*. The call that is effectual, whoever brings it, it is Christ that sends it. *The Master is come, and calleth for thee*. (1.) She calls Christ the Master; *διδάσκαλε*, a teaching Master, by that title he was commonly called and known among them. Mr. George Herbert took pleasure in calling Christ, my Master. (2.) She triumphs in his arrival: the Master is come, He whom we have long wished and waited for, *He is come, he is come*; this was the best cordial in the present distress. Lazarus is gone, and our comfort in him gone, but the Master is come, who is better than the dearest friend, and has that in him which will abundantly make up all our losses. He is come, who is our teacher, who will teach us how to get good by our sorrow, Psalm xciv. 17. who will teach, and so comfort. (3.) She invites her sister to go and meet him; he calls for thee, enquires what is become of thee, and would have thee sent for. Note, When Christ our Master comes, he calls for us. He comes in his word and ordinances, and calls us to them, calls us by them, calls us to himself. He calls for thee in particular, for thee by name, Psalm xxvii. 8. And if he call thee he will cure thee, he will comfort thee.

2. The haste which Mary made to Christ upon this notice given her, ver. 29. *As soon as she heard this good news*, that the Master was come, she arose quickly, and came to him. She little thought how near he was to her, for he is often nearer to them that mourn in Sion that they are aware of; but when they knew how near he was, she starts up, and in a transport of joy, runs to meet him; the least intimation of Christ's gracious approaches is enough to a lively faith, which stands ready to take the hint, and answer the first call. When Christ was come, (1.) She did not consult the decorum of her mourning, but forgetting ceremony, and the common usage in such cases, she runs through the town to meet Christ. Let not nice punctilios of

of decency and honour deprive us at any time of opportunities of conversing with Christ. (2.) She did not consult her neighbours the Jews, that were with her comforting her; she left them all to come to him, and did not only not ask their advice, but not so much as ask their leave, or beg their pardon for her rudeness.

We are told, *ver. 30.* where she found the Master; he was not yet come into Bethany, but was at the town's end, in that place where Martha met him. See here, 1. Christ's love to his work; he staid near the place where the grave was, that he might be ready to go to it: and would not go into the town to refresh himself after the fatigue of his journey, till he had done the work he came to do; nor would he go into the town, lest it should look like ostentation, and a design to levy a crowd to be spectators of the miracle. 2. Mary's love to Christ; still she *loved much*: Though Christ had seemed unkind in his delays, yet she can take nothing amiss from him. Let us go thus to Christ *without the camp*, Heb. xiii. 13.

3. The misconception which the Jews that were with Mary, made of her going away so hastily, *ver. 31.* They said *She goes to the grave to weep there!* Martha bore up better under this affliction than Mary did, who was a woman of a tender and sorrowful spirit; such was her natural temper. Those, that are so, have need to watch against melancholy, and ought to be pitied and helped. Those comforters found that their formalities did her no service, but that she hardened herself in sorrow, and therefore concluded when she went out, and turned that way, it was to go to the grave, and weep there. See, 1. What often is the folly and fault of mourners: they contrive how to aggravate their own grief, and to make it worse. We are apt in such cases to take a strange pleasure in our own pain, and to say we do well to be passionate in our grief, even unto death, apt to fasten upon those things that aggravate the affliction, and what good doth it to us, when it is our duty to reconcile ourselves to the will of God in it. What need mourners go to the grave to weep there, when they sorrow not as those that have no hope. Affliction of itself is grievous, why should we make it more so? 2. What is the wisdom and duty of comforters; and that is to prevent as much as may be, in those who grieve inordinately, the revival of the sorrow, and to divert it. Those Jews that followed Mary, were thereby led to Christ, and became the witnesses of one of his most glorious miracles. It is good cleaving to Christ's friends in their sorrows, for thereby we may come to know him better.

4. Mary's address to our Lord Jesus, *ver. 32.* she came attended with her train of comforters, and fell down at his feet, as one overwhelmed with a passionate sorrow, and said with many tears (as appears, *ver. 33.*) *Lord if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died,* as Martha said before, for they had often said it to one another. Now here,

1. Her posture is very humble and submissive; *She fell down at his feet*, which was more than Martha did, who had a great command of her passions. She fell down as a sinking mourner, but fell down at his feet, as a humble petitioner. This Mary had sitted at Christ's feet to hear his word, Luke x. 39. and here we find her there on another errand. Note, Those that in a day of peace set themselves at Christ's feet to receive instructions from him, may with comfort and confidence in a day of trouble, cast themselves at his feet with hope to find favour with him. She fell at his feet, as one submitting to his will in what was now to be done. When we are in affliction, we must cast ourselves at Christ's feet in a penitent sorrow and self abasement for sin, and a patient resignation of ourselves to the divine conduct. Mary's casting herself at Christ's feet, was in token of the profound respect and veneration she had for him. Thus they were wont to give honour to their kings and princes: but our Lord Jesus not appearing in secular glory as an earthly prince, they who by this posture of adoration give honour to him, certainly looked upon him as more than man, and intended hereby to give him divine honour. Mary hereby made profession of the Christian faith, as truly as Martha did, and in effect said, *I believe that thou art the Christ; bowing the knee to Christ and confessing him with the tongue*, are put together as equivalent, Rom. xiv. 11. Phil. ii. This she did in presence of the Jews that attended her, who, though friends to her and her family, yet were bitter enemies to Christ; yet in their sight she fell at Christ's feet, as one that was neither ashamed to own the veneration she had for Christ, nor afraid of disobliging her friends and neighbours by it. Let them resent it as they pleased, she falls at his feet, and if this be to be vile, will be yet more vile, see Cant. viii. 1. We serve a master whom we have no reason to be ashamed of, and whose acceptance of our services is sufficient to balance the reproach of men and all their revilings.

2. Her address is very pathetic, *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.* Christ's delay was designed for the best, and proved so, yet both the sisters very indecently cast the same in his teeth, and in effect charge him with the death of their brother; this repeated challenge he might justly have resented; might have told them he had something else to do than to be at their beck, and to attend to them; he must come when his business would permit him; but not a word of this, he considered the circumstances of their affliction, and that losers think they may have leave to speak; and therefore overlooked the rudeness of this welcome, and gave us an example of mildness and meekness in such cases. Mary added no more, as Martha did, but it appears by what follows, that what she fell short in words, she made up in tears; she said less than Martha, but wept more; and tears of devout affection have a voice, a loud prevailing voice in the ears of Christ, no rhetoric like that.

33. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled. 34. And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. 35. Jesus wept. 36. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! 37. And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? 38. Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. 39. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. 40. Jesus said unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? 41. Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. 42. And I know that thou hearest me always: but because of the people

which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. 43. And when he had thus spoken he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth. 44. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

Here we have,

First, Christ's tender sympathy with his afflicted friends, and the share he took to himself in their sorrows, which appeared three ways.

1. By the inward groans and troubles of his spirit, *ver. 33.* Jesus saw Mary weeping, for the loss of a loving brother, and the Jews that came with her weeping for the loss of a good neighbour and friend; when he saw what a place of weepers, a *bochim* this was, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. See here,

(1.) The griefs of the sons of men represented in the tears of Mary and her friends, what an emblem was here of this world, this vale of tears. Nature itself teacheth us to weep over our dear relations when they are removed by death; providence thereby calls to weeping and mourning. It is likely Lazarus's estate devolved upon his sisters, and was a considerable addition to their fortunes; and in such a case, people say now-a-days, though they cannot wish their relations dead (that is, they do not say they do) yet if they were dead, they would not wish them alive again; but these sisters, whatever they got by their brother's death, heartily wished him alive again. Religion teaches us likewise to weep with them that weep, as these Jews here with Mary, considering that we ourselves also are in the body. They that truly love their friends will share with them in their joys and griefs, for what is friendship, but a communication of affections? Job xvi. 5.

(2.) The grace of the Son of God, and his compassion towards those that are in misery. In all their afflictions he is afflicted, Isa. lxiii. 9. Judges x. 16. When Christ saw them all in tears, 1. He groaned in the spirit. He suffered himself to be tempted, as we are when we are disturbed by some great affliction yet without sin. This was an expression, either, (1.) Of his displeasure at the inordinate grief of those about him, as Mark v. 39. *Why make ye this ado and weep?* What a hurry is here? doth this become those that believe a God, a heaven, and another world? Or, (2.) Of his resentment of the calamitous state of human life, and the power of death, which fallen man is subject to; being now to make a vigorous attack upon death and the grave, he thus stirred up himself to the encounter, put on the garments of vengeance, and his fury it upheld him; and that he might the more resolutely undertake the redress of our grievances, and the cure of our griefs, he was pleased to make himself sensible of the weight of them, and under the burden of them he now groaned in spirit. Or, (3.) It was an expression of his kind sympathy with his friends that were in sorrow. Here was the sounding of the bowels, and the mercies which the afflicted church so earnestly solicits for, Isa. lxiii. 15. Christ not only seemed concerned, but he groaned in the spirit; he was inwardly and sincerely affected with the case. David's pretended friends counterfeited sympathy to disguise their enmity, Psalm xli. 6. but we must learn of Christ to have our love and sympathy without dissimulation. Christ's was a deep and hearty sigh. 2. He troubled himself; so the phrase is, very significantly. He had all the passions and affections of the human nature, for in all things he must be like to his brethren, but he had a perfect command of them, so that they were never up, but when and as they were called; he was never troubled, but when he troubled himself; as he saw cause; he often composed himself to trouble, but was never discomposed or disordered by it; he was voluntary both in his passion and in his compassion; he had power to lay down his grief and power to take it again.

2. His concern for them appeared by his kind enquiry after the poor remains of his deceased friend, *ver. 34.* *Where have ye laid him?* He knew where he was laid and yet asks, because, 1. He would thus express himself as a man, even then when he was going to exert the power of a God. Being found in fashion as a man, he accommodates himself to the way and manner of the sons of men; *non necesse, sed quasi necesse*, saith Austin here. 2. He enquired where the grave was, lest if he had gone straight to it of his own knowledge, the unbelieving Jews should thence have taken occasion to suspect a collusion between him and Lazarus, and a trick in the case. Many expositors observe this from Chrysostom. 3. He would thus divert the grief of his mourning friends, by raising their expectations of something great, *g. d.* I did not come hither with an address of condolence, to mingle a few fruitless insignificant tears with yours; no, I have other work to do; come, let us adjourn to the grave, and go about our business there. Note, A serious address to our work is the best remedy against inordinate grief. (4.) He would hereby intimate to us the special care he takes of the bodies of the saints, while they lie in the grave; he takes notice where they are laid, and will look after them; there is not only a covenant with the dust, but a guard upon it.

3. It appeared by his tears. Those about him did not tell him where the body was buried, but desired him to come and see, and led him directly to the grave; that his eye might yet more affect his heart with the calamity: As he was going to the grave, as if he had been following the corps thither, Jesus wept, *ver. 35.* A very short verse, but affords many useful instructions. 1. That Jesus Christ was really and truly man, and partook with the children, not only of flesh and blood, but of a human soul susceptible of the impressions of joy and grief, and other affections. Christ gave this proof of his humanity, in both senses of the word; that as a man he could weep, and as a merciful man he would weep, before he gave this proof of his divinity. 2. That he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, as was foretold, Isa. liii. 3. We never read that he laughed, but more than once we have him in tears. Thus he shews not only that a mournful state will consist with the love of God, but that they who sow to the Spirit, must sow in tears. 3. Tears of compassions well become Christians, and make them most to resemble Christ. It is a relief to those who are in sorrow to have their friends sympathize with them, especially such a friend as the Lord Jesus.

Different constructions were put upon Christ's weeping.

1. Some made a kind and candid interpretation of it, and what was very natural, *ver. 36.* Then said the Jews, behold how he loved him! They seem to admire he should have so strong an affection for one whom he was not related to, and whom he had not had any long acquaintance with, for Christ spent most of his time in Galilee, a great way from Lazarus. It becomes us, according to this example of Christ, to shew our love to our friends both living and dying. We must sorrow for our brethren that sleep in Jesus, as those that are full of love, though not void of hope; as the devout men that buried Stephen, Acts viii. 2. 2. Though our tears profit not the dead, they embalm their memory. These tears were indications of his particular love to Lazarus; but he has given proofs no less evident of his love to all the saints, in that he died for them. When he

only dropped a tear over Lazarus, they said, *See how he loved him!* much more reason have we to say so, for whom he hath laid down his life, see how he loved us. *Greater love has no man than this.*

2. Others made a peevish unfair reflection upon it, as if these tears spoke his inability to help his friend, *ver. 37. Could not this man, that opened the eyes of the blind, have prevented the death of Lazarus?* Here it is slyly insinuated, 1. That the death of Lazarus being (as it seemed by his tears) a great grief to him, if he could have prevented it he would, and therefore because he *did not*, they incline to think he *could not*, as when he was dying, they concluded he could not, because he did not save himself and come down from the cross; not considering that divine power is always directed in its operations by divine wisdom, not merely according to his will, but according to the counsel of his will, wherein it becomes us to acquiesce. If Christ's friends whom he loves die; if his church whom he loves be persecuted and afflicted, we must not impute it to any defect, either in his power or love, but conclude, it is because he sees it for the best. 2. That therefore it might justly be questioned, whether he did indeed *open the eyes of the blind*, i. e. whether it was not a sham. His not working this miracle, they thought enough to invalidate the former; at least it should seem he had a limited power, and therefore not a divine one. Christ soon convinced these *whisperers*, by raising Lazarus from the dead, which was the greater work, that he could have prevented his death, but therefore did not, because he would glorify himself the more.

Secondly, Christ's approach to the grave, and the preparation that was made for working this miracle.

1. Christ repeats his groans, upon his coming near the grave, *ver. 38. again groaning in himself he comes to the grave*; he groaned, (1.) Being displeased at the unbelief of those, who spoke doubtingly of his power, and blamed him for not preventing the death of Lazarus; he was *grieved for the hardness of their hearts*. He never groaned so much for his own pains and sufferings, as for the sins and follies of men, particularly Jerusalem's, *Matt. xxiii. 37.* (2.) Being affected with the fresh lamentations, which it is likely the mourning sisters made, when they came near the grave, more passionately and pathetically than before; his tender spirit was sensibly touched with their wailings. (3.) Some think he *groaned in spirit*, because to gratify the desire of his friends, he was to bring Lazarus again into this sinful troublesome world, from that rest into which he was newly entered; it would be a kindness to Martha and Mary, but it would be to him like thrusting one out to a stormy sea again; that was newly got into a safe and quiet harbour. If Lazarus had been let alone, Christ would quickly have gone to him into the other world; but being restored to life, Christ quickly left him behind in this world. (4.) Christ groaned as one that would afflict himself with the calamitous state of human nature, as subject to death, from which he was now about to redeem Lazarus. Thus he stirred up himself to take hold on God in the prayer he was to make, that he might *offer it up with strong crying*, *Heb. v. 7.* Ministers when they are sent by the preaching of the gospel to raise dead souls, should be much affected with the deplorable condition of those they preach to and pray for, and groan in themselves to think of it.

2. The grave is here described wherein Lazarus lay; *it was a cave and a stone laid upon it*. The graves of the common people, probably were digged as ours are; but persons of distinction were, as with us, interred in vaults, so Lazarus was, and such was the sepulchre in which Christ was buried. Probably this fashion was kept up among the Jews, in imitation of the patriarchs who buried their dead in the cave of Machpelah, *Gen. xxiii. 19.* This care taken of the dead bodies of their friends, intimates their expectation of their resurrection; they reckoned the solemnity of the funeral ended when the stone was rolled to the grave, or as here, *laid upon it*, like that at the mouth of the den, into which Daniel was cast, *Dan. vi. 17.* that the *purpose might not be changed*: intimating that the dead are separated from the living, and gone the way whence they shall not return. This stone was probably a *grave-stone*, with an inscription upon it, which the Greeks called *μνημείον*, a *memorandum*, because it is both a *memorial* of the dead, and a *memento* to the living, putting them in remembrance of that which we are all concerned to remember. It is called by the Latins, *Momentum*, a *monendo*, because it gives warning.

3. Orders are given to remove the stone, *ver. 39. Take ye away the stone*. He would have this stone removed, that all the standers-by might see the body lie dead in the sepulchre; and that way might be made for its coming out, and it might appear to be a true body and not a *ghost or spectre*. He would have some of the servants to remove it, that they might be witnesses, by the smell of the putrefaction of the body, and that therefore it was truly dead. It is a good step towards the raising of a soul to spiritual life, when the stone is taken away, when prejudices are removed and got over, and way made for the word to the heart, that it may do its work there, and say what it has to say.

4. An objection made by Martha against the opening of the grave, *Lord by this time he stinketh, or is become noisome, for he has been dead four days*, *τετραήμερος γάρ ἐστιν, quatri-duanus est*: he is four days old in the other world; a citizen and inhabitant of the grave of four days standing. Probably Martha perceived the body to smell, as they were removing the stone, and therefore cried out thus.

1. It is easy from hence to observe the nature of human bodies, four days is but a little while, yet what a great change will that make with the body of man, if it be but so long *without food*, much more if so long *without life*. Dead bodies (saith Dr. Hammond) after a revolution of the humours, which is completed in seventy-two hours, naturally tend to putrefaction; and the Jews say, that by the fourth day after death, the body is so altered, that one cannot be sure it is such a person, so Maimonides in *Light-foot*. Therefore, Christ rose the third day, because he was not to see *corruption*.

2. It is not so easy to say what was Martha's design in saying this, 1. Some think she said it in due tenderness, and such as decency teaches to the dead body: now it began to putrify, she did not care it should be thus publicly shewn and made a spectacle of. 2. Others think she said it out of a concern for Christ, lest the smell of the dead body should be *offensive* to him. That which is very noisome is compared to an open sepulchre, *Psal. v. 9.* If there were any thing noisome, she would not have her master near it; but he was none of those tender and delicate ones, that cannot bear an ill smell; if he had, he would not have visited the world of mankind, which sin had made a perfect dunghill altogether stinking, *Psal. xiv. 3.* 3. It should seem by Christ's answer, that it was the language of her unbelief and distrust; Lord, it is too late now to attempt any kindness to him, his body begins to rot, and it is impossible this putrid carcase should *live*. She gives up his case as helpless and hopeless, there having been no instances either of late or formerly, of any raised to life after they had begun to see corruption. When *our bones are dried*, we are ready to say *our hope is lost*. Yet this distrustful word of her's served to make the miracle both the more evident and the more illustrious; by this it appeared he was truly dead, and not in a trance; for though the posture of a dead body might be counter-

feited, the smell could not. Her suggesting that it *could not be done*, puts the more honour upon him that *did it*.

5. The gentle reproof Christ gave Martha for the weakness of her faith, *ver. 40. Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God*. This word of his to her was not before recorded; it is probable he said it to her, when she had said, *ver. 27. Lord, I believe*; and it is enough that it is recorded here, where it is repeated. Note, 1. Our Lord Jesus has given us all the assurances imaginable, that a *sincere faith* shall at length be crowned with a *blessed vision*; if thou believe, *thou shalt see God's glorious appearances for thee in this world, and to thee in the other world*. If we will take Christ's word, and rely on his power and faithfulness, we shall *see the glory of God*, and be happy in the sight. 2. We have need to be often minded of these *sure mercies*, with which our Lord hath encouraged us. Christ doth not give a direct answer to what Martha had said, nor any particular promise of what he would do, but orders her to keep hold of the general assurances he had already given; *only believe*. We are apt to forget what Christ hath spoken, and need him to put us in mind of it by his Spirit, *said I not unto thee so and so?* And dost thou think he will ever unsay it?

6. The opening of the grave, in obedience to Christ's order, notwithstanding Martha's objection, *ver. 41. Then they took away the stone*. Then, when Martha was satisfied, and had waved her objection, then they proceeded. If we will see the glory of God we must let Christ take his own way, and not prescribe, but subscribe to him. *They took away the stone*, and that was all they could do, Christ only could *give life*. What man can do is but to *prepare the way of the Lord*, to fill the valleys, and level the hills, and, as here, to *take away the stone*.

Thirdly, The miracle itself wrought. The spectators invited by the rolling away the stone, gathered about the grave not to commit *dust to dust, earth to earth*, but to receive dust from the dust, and earth from the earth again; and their expectations being raised, our Lord Jesus addresses himself to his work.

1. He applies himself to his living Father in heaven, so he had called him, *John vi. 57.* and so eyes him here.

1. The gesture he used was very significant; he *lifted up his eyes*, an outward expression of the elevation of his mind; and to shew them who stood by from whence he derived his power. And so set us an example; this outward sign is hereby recommended to our practice, see *John xvii. 1.* look how they will answer it who profanely ridicule it; but that which is especially charged upon us hereby, is to *lift up our hearts* to God in the heavens; what is prayer, but the ascent of the soul to God, and the directing of its affections and motions heavenwards. He *lifteth up his eyes* as looking *above* and looking *beyond* the grave where Lazarus lay, and *over-looking* all the difficulties that arose from thence, that he might have his eyes fixed upon the divine omnipotence; to teach us to do as Abraham, who considered not *his own body now dead, nor the deadness of Sarah's womb*, never took those into his thoughts, and so gained such a degree of faith, as not to *stagger at the promise*, *Rom. iv. 20.*

2. His address to God was with great assurance, and such a confidence as became him. *Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me*. He hath here taught us, by his own example, 1. In prayer to call God *Father*, and to draw nigh to him as children to a Father, with a humble reverence, and yet with a holy boldness. 2. In our prayers to *praise him*, and when we come to beg for further mercy, thankfully to acknowledge former favours. Thanksgivings that speak *God's glory*, not *our own*, like the Pharisee's *God I thank thee*, are decent forms, into which to put our supplications.

But our Saviour's thanksgiving here was intended to express the unshaken assurance he had of the effecting of this miracle, which he had in his own power to do in concurrence with his Father. *Father, I thank thee*, that my will and thine are in this matter as always the same. Elijah and Elisha raised the dead, as servants, by *intreaty*; but Christ as a Son, by *authority*, having life in himself, and power to quicken whom he would; and he speaks of this as his own act, *ver. 11. I go, that I may awake him*; yet he speaks of it as what he had obtained by prayer, for his Father *heard him*; probably he put up the prayer for it when he *groaned in spirit*, once and again, *ver. 33—38.* in a *mental prayer*, with groanings which could not be uttered. Now Christ speaks of this miracle as an answer to prayer. (1.) Because he would thus *humble himself*: though he were a son, yet *learned he this obedience, to ask and receive*. His mediatorial crown was granted him upon request, though it is *of right*, *Psal. ii. 8.* and *John xvii. 5.* he prays for the glory he had before the world, though having never forfeited it might have demanded it. (2.) Because he was pleased thus to *honour prayer*, making it the key wherewith even he unlocked the treasures of divine power and grace. Thus he would teach us in prayer by the lively exercise of faith to *enter into the holiest*.

Now Christ being assured his prayer was answered.

1. He professeth his thankful acceptance of this answer, *I thank thee that thou hast heard me*. Though the miracle was not yet wrought, yet the prayer was answered, and he triumphs before the victory. No other can pretend to such an assurance as Christ had, yet we may by this faith in the promise have a prospect of mercy before it be actually given in, and may rejoice in that prospect, and give God thanks for it. In David's devotions; the same psalm which begins with prayer for mercy, closes with thanksgivings for it.

Note, 1. Mercies in answer to prayer, ought in a special manner to be acknowledged with thankfulness. Besides the grant of the mercy itself, we are to value it as a great favour to have our poor prayers taken notice of. 2. We ought to *meet* the first appearances of the return of prayer with early thanksgiving. As God *answers us with mercy*, even *before we call*, and *hears while we are yet speaking*, so we should answer him with praise, even before he grants, and give him thanks while he is yet speaking good words and comfortable words.

2. He professeth his cheerful assurance of a ready answer at any time, *ver. 47. And I know that thou hearest me always*. Let none think that this was some uncommon favour granted him now; such as he never had before, nor should ever have again; no, he had the same divine power going along with him in his whole undertaking, and undertook nothing but what he knew to be agreeable to the counsel of God's will. *I gave thanks* (saith he) for being heard in this, because I am sure to be heard in every thing. See here, 1. The mighty interest our Lord Jesus had in heaven; the Father *heard him always*, he had access to the Father upon every occasion, and *success* with him in every errand. And we may be sure his interest is not the less for his going to heaven, which may encourage us to depend upon his intercession, and put all our petitions into his hand, for we are sure that him the Father *hears always*. 2. The confidence he had of that interest *I knew it*. He did not in the least hesitate or doubt concerning it; but had an entire satisfaction in his own mind of the Father's complacency in him, and concurrence with him in every thing. We cannot have such a particular assurance as he had: but this we know, that *whatsoever we ask according to his will, he heareth us*. 1 John v. 14, 15.

But

But why should Christ give this public intimation of his obtaining this miracle by prayer? He adds, it is *because of the people which stand by, that they may believe that thou hast sent me; for prayer may preach.*

1. It was to obviate the objections of his enemies, and their reflections. It was blasphemously suggested by the Pharisees, and their creatures, that he wrought his miracles by compact with the devil; now to evidence the contrary, he openly made his address to God, using *prayers*, and not *charms*, not *peeping and muttering*, as they did that used *familiar spirits*, Isa. viii. 19. but with elevated eyes and voice professing his communication with heaven, and dependence on heaven.

2. It was to corroborate the faith of those that were well inclined to him, that they may believe that thou hast sent me, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. Moses, to shew that God sent him, made the earth open, and swallow men up, Numb. xvi. 10. Elijah, to shew that God sent him, made fire come from heaven, and devour men, for the law was a dispensation of terror and death; but Christ proves his mission by raising to life one that was dead. Some give this sense; had Christ declared his doing it freely by his own power, some of his weak disciples, who as yet understood not his divine nature, would have thought he took too much upon him, and have been stumbled at it; these *babes* could not bear that *strong meat*, therefore he chooses to speak of his power as received and derived; he speaks self-denyingly of himself, that he might speak the more plainly to us. *Non ita respexit ad suam dignitatem atque ad nostram salutem.* Jansenius.

2. He now applies himself to his *dead friend in the earth.* He cried with a loud voice, *Lazarus come forth.* He could have raised Lazarus by a silent exerting of his power and will, and the undiscernible operations of the Spirit of life, but he did it by a call, a loud call.

1. To be significant of the power then put forth for the raising of Lazarus; how he created this new thing, he spake and it was done. He cried aloud, to signify the greatness of the work, and of the power employed in it, and to excite himself as it were to this attack upon the gates of death, as soldiers engage with a shout. Speaking to Lazarus it was proper to cry with a loud voice; for, 1. The soul of Lazarus, which was to be called back, was at a distance, not hovering about the grave, as the Jews fancied, but removed to Hades, the world of spirits; now it is natural to speak aloud, when we call to those at a distance. 2. The body of Lazarus, which was to be called up was asleep, and we use to speak loud, when we would awake any out of sleep. He cried with a loud voice, that the scripture might be fulfilled, Isa. xlv. 19. *I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth.*

2. To be typical of other works of wonder, and particularly other resurrections, which the power of Christ was to effect. This loud call was a figure,

(1.) Of the gospel call, by which dead souls were to be brought out of the grave of sin, which resurrection Christ had formerly spoken of, John v. 25. and of his word as the means of it, John vi. 63. and now he gives a specimen of it. By his word, he saith to souls, *live, yea, he saith to them, live.* Ezek. xv. 6. *Arise from the dead,* Eph. v. 14. The Spirit of life from God entered into those that had been dead and dry bones, when Ezekiel prophesied over them, Ezek. xxxvii. 10. They who infer from the commands of the word to *turn and live*, that man has a power of his own to convert and regenerate himself, might as well infer from this call to Lazarus, that he had a power to raise himself to life.

(2.) Of the sound of the archangel's trumpet at the last day with which they that sleep in the dust shall be awakened and summoned before the great tribunal. When Christ shall descend with a shout, a call, or command, like this here, *Come forth;* See Psalm i. 4. *he shall call both to the heavens for their souls, and to the earth for their bodies, that he may judge his people.*

This loud call here was but short, yet mighty through God to the battering down of the strong holds of the grave.

1. He calls him by name, Lazarus, as we call those by their names whom we would awake out of a fast sleep. God said to Moses, as a mark of his own favour, *I know thee by name.* The naming of him intimates that the same individual person that died shall rise again at the last day. He that calls the stars by their names, can distinguish by name his stars that are in the dust of the earth, and will lose none of them.

2. He calls him out of the grave, speaking to him as if he were already alive, and had nothing to do but to come out of his grave. He doth not say unto him, *live*, for he himself must give life, but he saith to him, *move*, for when by the grace of Christ we live spiritually, we must stir up ourselves to *more*; the grave of sin and this world is no place for those whom Christ has quickened, and therefore they must come forth.

3. The event was according to the intention, *he that was dead came forth*, ver. 44. Power went along with the word of Christ to re-unite the soul and body of Lazarus, and then he came forth. The miracle is described not by its visible springs to satisfy our curiosity, but its visible effects to confirm our faith. Do any ask where the soul of Lazarus was, during the four days of its separation? We are not told, but have reason to think it was in paradise, in joy, and felicity; but you will say, was it not then really an unkindness to it to return it into the prison of the body? And if it were, yet being for the honour of Christ, and the serving of the interests of his kingdom, it was no more an injury to him than it was to St. Paul, to continue in the flesh, when he knew that to depart to Christ was so much better. If any ask whether Lazarus, after he was raised, could give an account or description of his soul's removal out of the body or return to it, or what he saw in the other world? I suppose, both those changes were so unaccountable to himself, that he must say with Paul, *whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell;* and of what he saw and heard, that it was not lawful or possible to express it. In a world of sense we cannot frame to ourselves, much less communicate to others, any adequate ideas of the world of spirits, and the affairs of that world; let us not covet to be wise above what is written, and this is all that is written concerning the resurrection of Lazarus, that *he that was dead came forth.* And some have observed, that though we read of many that were raised from the dead, who no doubt conversed familiarly with men afterwards, yet the scripture has not recorded one word spoken by any of them, except by our Lord Jesus only.

This miracle was wrought, 1. *Speedily*, nothing intervenes between the command, *Come forth;* and the effect, *he came forth:* dictum, factum, let there be life, and there was life. Thus the change in the resurrection will be in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, 1 Cor. xv. 52. The almighty power that can do it, can do it in an instant; *then shalt thou call, and I will answer;* will come at the call, as Lazarus; here am I. 2. *Perfectly;* He was so thoroughly revived, that he got up out of his grave, as strongly as ever he got up out of his bed; and returned not only to life but health. He was not raised to serve a present turn, but to live as other men. 3. With this additional miracle (as some reckon it) that he came out of his grave, though he was fettered with his grave clothes, with which he was bound hand and foot, and his face bound about with a napkin; for so the manner of the Jews was to bury; and he came forth in the same dress wherein he was buried, that it might appear it was he himself, and not another; and that he was not only alive, but strong, and able to walk, after a sort, even in his grave clothes. The binding of his face with a napkin, proved that he had been

really dead, for otherwise, in less than so many days time, that would have smothered him. And the standers-by in unbinding him would handle him, and see him, that it was he himself, and so be witnesses of the miracle. Now see here, (1.) How little we carry away with us when we leave the world, only a winding sheet and a coffin; there is no change of raiment in the grave, nothing but a single suit of grave clothes. (2.) What condition we shall be in, in the grave. What wisdom or device can there be, when the eyes are hood-winked, or what working, when the hands and feet are fettered! and so it will be in the grave whither we are going. Lazarus being come forth, hampered and embarrassed with his grave clothes, we may well imagine that those about the grave were exceedingly surprised and frightened at it, we would be so, if we should see a dead body rise; but Christ, to make the thing familiar, sets them to work, *loose him*, slacken his grave clothes, that they may serve for day clothes till he comes to his house, and then he will go himself so clad, without guide or supporter to his own house. As in the Old Testament, the translations of Enoch and Elias were sensible demonstrations of an invisible and future state, the one about the middle of the patriarchal age, the other of the Mosical æconomy; so the resurrection of Lazarus was in the New Testament designed for the confirmation of the doctrine of the resurrection.

45. ¶ Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. 46. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. 47. ¶ Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees, a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. 48. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. 49. And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, 50. Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. 51. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation. 52. And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. 53. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. 54. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples. 55. ¶ And the Jews passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves. 56. Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast? 57. Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him.

We have here an account of the consequences of this glorious miracle which were as usual; to some it was a savour of life unto life, to others of death unto death.

1. Some were invited by it, and induced to believe. Many of the Jews when they saw the things that Jesus did, believed on him, and well they might, for it was an incontestible proof of his divine mission. They had often heard of his miracles, and yet evaded the conviction of them, by calling in question the matter of fact; but now they had themselves seen this done, their unbelief was conquered, and they yielded at last; But blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed. The more we see of Christ, the more cause we shall see to love him, and confide in him. These were some of those Jews that came to Mary to comfort her. When we are doing good offices to others, we put ourselves in the way of receiving favours from God, and have opportunities of getting good when we are doing good.

2. Others were irritated by it, and hardened in their unbelief.

1. The informers were so, ver. 46. Some of them who were eye-witnesses of the miracle were so far from being convinced that they went to the Pharisees, whom they knew to be his implacable enemies, and told them what things Jesus had done; not merely as a matter of news worthy their notice, much less an inducement to them to think more favourably of Christ, but with a spiteful design to excite who needed no spur the more vigorously to persecute him. Here is a strange instance, 1. of a most obstinate infidelity, refusing to yield to the most powerful means of conviction, and it is hard to imagine how they could evade the force of this evidence, but that the god of this world had blinded their eyes. 2. Of a most inveterate enmity: If they would not be satisfied that he was to be believed in as the Christ, yet one would think they should have been mollified, and persuaded not to persecute him; but if the water be not sufficient to quench the fire, it will inflame it. They told what Jesus had done, and told no more but what was true; but their malice gave a tincture of diabolism to their information equal to that of lying; perverting what is true is as bad as forging what is false. Dog is called a false, lying, and deceitful tongue. Psal. cxx. 2, 3.—liii. 2, 3, 4. though what he said was true.

2. The judges, the leaders, the blind leaders of the people were no less exasperated by the report made to them, and here we are told what they did.

1. A special counsel is called and held, ver. 47. Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees a council, as was foretold, Psal. ii. 2. The rulers take council together against the Lord. Consults of the Sanhedrin were intended for the public good, but here under colour of that the greatest injury and mischief is done to the people. The things that belong to the nation's peace were hid from the eyes of those that were intrusted with its counsels. This council was called, not only for joint advice, but for mutual irritation that as iron sharpens iron, and as coals are burning to coals, and wood to fire, so they might exasperate and inflame one another with enmity and rage against Christ and his doctrine.

2. The case is proposed, and shewed to be weighty, and of mighty consequence.

only dropped a tear over Lazarus, they said, *See how he loved him!* much more reason have we to say so, for whom he hath laid down his life, see how he loved us. *Greater love has no man than this.*

2. Others made a peevish unfair reflection upon it, as if these tears spoke his inability to help his friend, *ver. 37. Could not this man, that opened the eyes of the blind, have prevented the death of Lazarus?* Here it is slyly insinuated, 1. That the death of Lazarus being (as it seemed by his tears) a great grief to him, if he could have prevented it he would, and therefore because he *did not*, they incline to think he *could not*, as when he was dying, they concluded he could not, because he did not save himself and come down from the cross; not considering that divine power is always directed in its operations by divine wisdom, not merely according to his will, but according to the counsel of his will, wherein it becomes us to acquiesce. If Christ's friends whom he loves die; if his church whom he loves be persecuted and afflicted, we must not impute it to any defect, either in his power or love, but conclude, it is because he sees it for the best. 2. That therefore it might justly be questioned, whether he did indeed *open the eyes of the blind*, i. e. whether it was not a sham. His not working this miracle, they thought enough to invalidate the former; at least it should seem he had a limited power, and therefore not a divine one. Christ soon convinced these *whisperers*, by raising Lazarus from the dead, which was the greater work, that he could have prevented his death, but therefore did not, because he would glorify himself the more.

Secondly, Christ's approach to the grave, and the preparation that was made for working this miracle.

1. Christ repeats his groans, upon his coming near the grave, *ver. 38. again groaning in himself he comes to the grave*; he groaned, (1.) Being displeased at the unbelief of those, who spoke doubtingly of his power, and blamed him for not preventing the death of Lazarus; he was *grieved for the hardness of their hearts*. He never groaned so much for his own pains and sufferings, as for the sins and follies of men, particularly Jerusalem's, *Matt. xxiii. 37.* (2.) Being affected with the fresh lamentations, which it is likely the mourning sisters made, when they came near the grave, more passionately and pathetically than before; his tender spirit was sensibly touched with their wailings. (3.) Some think he *groaned in spirit*, because to gratify the desire of his friends, he was to bring Lazarus again into this sinful troublesome world, from that rest into which he was newly entered; it would be a kindness to Martha and Mary, but it would be to him like thrusting one out to a stormy sea again, that was newly got into a safe and quiet harbour. If Lazarus had been let alone, Christ would quickly have gone to him into the other world; but being restored to life, Christ quickly left him behind in this world. (4.) Christ groaned as one that would affect himself with the calamitous state of human nature, as subject to death, from which he was now about to redeem Lazarus. Thus he stirred up himself to take hold on God in the prayer he was to make, that he might *offer it up with strong crying*, *Heb. v. 7.* Ministers when they are sent by the preaching of the gospel to raise dead souls, should be much affected with the deplorable condition of those they preach to and pray for, and groan in themselves to think of it.

2. The grave is here described wherein Lazarus lay; *it was a cave and a stone laid upon it*. The graves of the common people, probably were digged as ours are; but persons of distinction were, as with us, interred in vaults, so Lazarus was, and such was the sepulchre in which Christ was buried. Probably this fashion was kept up among the Jews, in imitation of the patriarchs who buried their dead in the cave of Machpelah, *Gen. xxiii. 19.* This care taken of the dead bodies of their friends, intimates their expectation of their resurrection; they reckoned the solemnity of the funeral ended when the stone was rolled to the grave, or as here, *laid upon it*, like that at the mouth of the den, into which Daniel was cast, *Dan. vi. 17.* that the purpose might not be changed: intimating that the dead are separated from the living, and gone the way whence they shall not return. This stone was probably a grave-stone, with an inscriptiⁿ upon it, which the Greeks called *μνημα*, a memorial, because it is both a memorial of the dead, and a memento to the living, putting them in remembrance of that which we are all concerned to remember. It is called by the Latins, *Momentum*, a *monendo*, because it gives warning.

3. Orders are given to remove the stone, *ver. 39. Take ye away the stone*. He would have this stone removed, that all the standers-by might see the body lie dead in the sepulchre; and that way might be made for its coming out, and it might appear to be a true body and not a ghost or spectre. He would have some of the servants to remove it, that they might be witnesses, by the smell of the putrefaction of the body, and that therefore it was truly dead. It is a good step towards the raising of a soul to spiritual life, when the stone is taken away, when prejudices are removed and got over, and way made for the word to the heart, that it may do its work there, and say what it has to say.

4. An objection made by Martha against the opening of the grave, *Lord by this time he stinketh, or is become noisome, for he has been dead four days*, *τις γὰρ ὁ καιρὸς, ὅτε ἔτι ἵνα ζήσῃ, ὅτε ἔτι ἵνα ζήσῃ*; he is four days old in the other world; a citizen and inhabitant of the grave of four days standing. Probably Martha perceived the body to smell, as they were removing the stone, and therefore cried out thus.

1. It is easy from hence to observe the nature of human bodies, four days is but a little while, yet what a great change will that make with the body of man, if it be but so long without food, much more if so long without life. Dead bodies (saith Dr. Hammond) after a revolution of the humours, which is completed in seventy-two hours, naturally tend to putrefaction; and the Jews say, that by the fourth day after death, the body is so altered, that one cannot be sure it is such a person, so Maimonides in *Light-foot*. Therefore, Christ rose the third day, because he was not to see corruption.

2. It is not so easy to say what was Martha's design in saying this, 1. Some think she said it in due tenderness, and such as decency teaches to the dead body: now it began to putrify, she did not care it should be thus publicly shewn and made a spectacle of. 2. Others think she said it out of a concern for Christ, lest the smell of the dead body should be offensive to him. That which is very noisome is compared to an open sepulchre, *Psal. v. 9.* If there were any thing noisome, she would not have her master near it; but he was none of those tender and delicate ones, that cannot bear an ill smell; if he had, he would not have visited the world of mankind, which sin had made a perfect dunghill altogether stinking, *Psal. xiv. 3.* 3. It should seem by Christ's answer, that it was the language of her unbelief and distrust; Lord, it is too late now to attempt any kindness to him, his body begins to rot, and it is impossible this putrid carcase should live. She gives up his case as helpless and hopeless, there having been no instances either of late or formerly, of any raised to life after they had begun to see corruption. When our bones are dried, we are ready to say our hope is lost. Yet this distrustful word of her's served to make the miracle both the more evident and the more illustrious; by this it appeared he was truly dead, and not in a trance; for though the posture of a dead body might be counter-

feited, the smell could not. Her suggesting that it *could not be done*, puts the more honour upon him that *did it*.

5. The gentle reproof Christ gave Martha for the weakness of her faith, *ver. 40. Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God.* This word of his to her was not before recorded; it is probable he said it to her, when she had said, *ver. 27. Lord, I believe*; and it is enough that it is recorded here, where it is repeated. Note, 1. Our Lord Jesus has given us all the assurances imaginable, that a sincere faith shall at length be crowned with a blessed vision; if thou believe, thou shalt see God's glorious appearances for thee in this world, and to thee in the other world. If we will take Christ's word, and rely on his power and faithfulness, we shall see the glory of God, and be happy in the sight. 2. We have need to be often minded of these *sure mercies*, with which our Lord hath encouraged us. Christ doth not give a direct answer to what Martha had said, nor any particular promise of what he would do, but orders her to keep hold of the general assurances he had already given; *only believe*. We are apt to forget what Christ hath spoken, and need him to put us in mind of it by his Spirit, *said I not unto thee so and so?* And dost thou think he will ever unsay it?

6. The opening of the grave, in obedience to Christ's order, notwithstanding Martha's objection, *ver. 41. Then they took away the stone. Then, when Martha was satisfied, and had waved her objection, then they proceeded.* If we will see the glory of God we must let Christ take his own way, and not prescribe, but subscribe to him. They took away the stone, and that was all they could do, Christ only could give life. What man can do is but to prepare the way of the Lord, to fill the valleys, and level the hills, and as here, to take away the stone.

Thirdly, The miracle itself wrought. The spectators invited by the rolling away the stone, gathered about the grave not to commit dust to dust, earth to earth, but to receive dust from the dust, and earth from the earth again; and their expectations being raised, our Lord Jesus addresses himself to his work.

1. He applies himself to his living Father in heaven, so he had called him, *John vi. 57.* and so eyes him here.

1. The gesture he used was very significant; he lifted up his eyes, an outward expression of the elevation of his mind; and to shew them who stood by from whence he derived his power. And so set us an example; this outward sign is hereby recommended to our practice, see *John xvii. 1.* look how they will answer it who profanely ridicule it; but that which is especially charged upon us hereby, is to lift up our hearts to God in the heavens; what is prayer, but the ascent of the soul to God, and the directing of its affections and motions heavenwards. He lifteth up his eyes as looking above and looking beyond the grave where Lazarus lay, and overlooking all the difficulties that arose from thence, that he might have his eyes fixed upon the divine omnipotence; to teach us to do as Abraham, who considered not his own body now dead, nor the deadness of Sarah's womb, never took those into his thoughts, and so gained such a degree of faith, as not to stagger at the promise, *Rom. iv. 20.*

2. His address to God was with great assurance, and such a confidence as became him. Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me. He hath here taught us, by his own example, 1. In prayer to call God Father, and to draw nigh to him as children to a Father, with a humble reverence, and yet with a holy boldness. 2. In our prayers to praise him, and when we come to beg for further mercy, thankfully to acknowledge former favours. Thanksgivings that speak God's glory, not our own, like the Pharisee's God I thank thee, are decent forms, into which to put our supplications.

But our Saviour's thanksgiving here was intended to express the unshaken assurance he had of the effecting of this miracle, which he had in his own power to do in concurrence with his Father. Father, I thank thee, that my will and thine are in this matter as always the same. Elijah and Elisha raised the dead, as servants, by intreaty; but Christ as a Son, by authority, having life in himself, and power to quicken whom he would; and he speaks of this as his own act, *ver. 11. I go, that I may awake him*; yet he speaks of it as what he had obtained by prayer, for his Father heard him; probably he put up the prayer for it when he groaned in spirit, once and again, *ver. 33—38.* in a mental prayer, with groanings which could not be uttered. Now Christ speaks of this miracle as an answer to prayer. (1.) Because he would thus humble himself; though he were a son, yet learned he this obedience, to ask and receive. His mediatorial crown was granted him upon request, though it is of right, *Psal. ii. 8.* and *John xvii. 5.* he prays for the glory he had before the world, though having never forfeited it might have demanded it. (2.) Because he was pleased thus to honour prayer, making it the key wherewith even he unlocked the treasures of divine power and grace. Thus he would teach us in prayer by the lively exercise of faith to enter into the holiest.

Now Christ being assured his prayer was answered,

1. He professeth his thankful acceptance of this answer, *I thank thee that thou hast heard me*. Though the miracle was not yet wrought, yet the prayer was answered, and he triumphs before the victory. No other can pretend to such an assurance as Christ had, yet we may by this faith in the promise have a prospect of mercy before it be actually given in, and may rejoice in that prospect, and give God thanks for it. In David's devotions; the same psalm which begins with prayer for mercy, closes with thanksgivings for it.

Note, 1. Mercies in answer to prayer, ought in a special manner to be acknowledged with thankfulness. Besides the grant of the mercy itself, we are to value it as a great favour to have our poor prayers taken notice of. 2. We ought to meet the first appearances of the return of prayer with early thanksgiving. As God answers us with mercy, even before we call, and hears while we are yet speaking, so we should answer him with praise, even before he grants, and give him thanks while he is yet speaking good words, and comfortable words.

2. He professeth his cheerful assurance of a ready answer at any time, *ver. 47. And I know that thou hearest me always*. Let none think that this was some uncommon favour granted him now, such as he never had before, nor should ever have again; no, he had the same divine power going along with him in his whole undertaking, and undertook nothing but what he knew to be agreeable to the counsel of God's will. I gave thanks (saith he) for being heard in this, because I am sure to be heard in every thing. See here, 1. The mighty interest our Lord Jesus had in heaven; the Father heard him always, he had access to the Father upon every occasion, and success with him in every errand. And we may be sure his interest is not the less for his going to heaven, which may encourage us to depend upon his intercession, and put all our petitions into his hand, for we are sure that him the Father hears always. 2. The confidence he had of that interest: I knew it. He did not in the least hesitate or doubt concerning it; but had an entire satisfaction in his own mind of the Father's complacency in him, and concurrence with him in every thing. We cannot have such a particular assurance as he had: but this we know, that whatsoever we ask according to his will, he heareth us. 1 John v. 14, 15.

But

But why should Christ give this public intimation of his obtaining this miracle by prayer? He adds, it is *because of the people which stand by, that they may believe that thou hast sent me; for prayer may preach.*

1. It was to *obviate* the objections of his enemies, and their reflections. It was blasphemously suggested by the Pharisees, and their creatures, that he wrought his miracles by compact with the devil; now to evidence the contrary, he openly made his address to God, using *prayers*, and not *charms*, not *peeping* and *muttering*, as they did that used *familiar spirits*, Isa. viii. 19. but with elevated eyes and voice professing his communication with heaven, and dependence on heaven.

2. It was to corroborate the faith of those that were well inclined to him, *that they may believe that thou hast sent me*, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. Moses, to shew that God sent him, made the earth open, and swallow men up, *Numb. xvi. 10.* Elijah, to shew that God sent him, made fire come from heaven, and devour men, for the *law* was a dispensation of terror and death; but Christ proves his mission by raising to life one that was dead. Some give this sense; had Christ declared his doing it freely by his own power, some of his weak disciples, who as yet understood not his divine nature, would have thought he took too much upon him, and have been stumbled at it; these *babes* could not bear that *strong meat*, therefore he chooses to speak of his power as received and derived; he speaks self-denyingly of himself, that he might speak the more plainly to us. *Non illi respexit ad suam dignitatem atque ad nostram salutem.* Jansenius.

2. He now applies himself to his *dead friend in the earth.* He cried with a loud voice, *Lazarus come forth.* He could have raised Lazarus by a silent exerting of his power and will, and the undiscernible operations of the Spirit of life, but he did it by a call, a loud call.

1. To be significant of the power then put forth for the raising of Lazarus; how he *created this new thing, he spake and it was done.* He cried aloud, to signify the greatness of the work, and of the power employed in it, and to excite himself as it were to this attack upon the gates of death, as soldiers engage with a shout. Speaking to Lazarus it was proper to cry with a loud voice; for, 1. The *soul* of Lazarus, which was to be called back, was at a distance, not hovering about the grave, as the Jews fancied, but removed to Hades, the world of spirits; now it is natural to speak aloud, when we call to those at a distance. 2. The *body* of Lazarus, which was to be called up was asleep, and we use to speak loud, when we would awake any out of sleep. He cried with a loud voice, that the scripture might be fulfilled, *Isa. xlv. 19. I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth.*

2. To be typical of other works of wonder, and particularly other resurrections, which the power of Christ was to effect. This loud call was a figure,

(1.) Of the gospel call, by which dead souls were to be brought out of the grave of sin, which resurrection Christ had formerly spoken of, *John v. 25.* and of his word as the means of it, *John vi. 63.* and now he gives a specimen of it. By his word, he saith to souls, *live, yea, he saith to them, live.* Ezek. xv. 6. *Arise from the dead, Eph. v. 14.* The Spirit of life from God entered into those that had been dead and dry bones, when Ezekiel prophesied over them, Ezek. xxxvii. 10. They who infer from the commands of the word to *turn and live*, that man has a power of his own to convert and regenerate himself, might as well infer from this call to Lazarus, that he had a power to raise himself to life.

(2.) Of the sound of the archangel's trumpet at the last day with which they that sleep in the dust shall be awakened and summoned before the great tribunal. When Christ shall descend with a shout, a call, or command, like this here, *Come forth; See Psalm l. 4. he shall call both to the heavens for their souls, and to the earth for their bodies, that he may judge his people.*

This loud call here was but short, yet mighty through God to the battering down of the strong holds of the grave.

1. He calls him by name, Lazarus, as we call those by their names whom we would awake out of a fast sleep. God said to Moses, as a mark of his own favour, *I know thee by name.* The naming of him intimates that the same individual person that died shall rise again at the last day. He that calls the stars by their names, can distinguish by name his stars that are in the dust of the earth, and will lose none of them.

2. He calls him out of the grave, speaking to him as if he were already alive, and had nothing to do but to come out of his grave. He doth not say unto him, *live*, for he himself must give life, but he saith to him, *move*, for when by the grace of Christ we live spiritually, we must stir up ourselves to move; the grave of sin and this world is no place for those whom Christ has quickened, and therefore they must come forth.

3. The event was according to the intention, *he that was dead came forth,* ver. 44. Power went along with the word of Christ to re-mite the soul and body of Lazarus, and then he came forth. The miracle is described not by its visible springs to satisfy our curiosity, but its visible effects to confirm our faith. Do any ask where the soul of Lazarus was, during the four days of its separation? We are not told, but have reason to think it was in paradise, in joy, and felicity; but you will say, was it not then really an unkindness in it to return it into the prison of the body? And if it were, yet being for the honour of Christ, and the serving of the interests of his kingdom, it was no more an injury to him than it was to St. Paul, to continue in the flesh, when he knew that to depart to Christ was so much better. If any ask whether Lazarus, after he was raised, could give an account or description of his soul's removal out of the body or return to it, or what he saw in the other world? I suppose, both those changes were so unaccountable to himself, that he must say with Paul, *whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell;* and of what he saw and heard, that it was not lawful or possible to express it. In a world of sense we cannot frame to ourselves, much less communicate to others, any adequate ideas of the world of spirits, and the affairs of that world; let us not covet to be wise above what is written, and this is all that is written concerning the resurrection of Lazarus, that *he that was dead came forth.* And some have observed, that though we read of many that were raised from the dead, who no doubt conversed familiarly with men afterwards, yet the scripture has not recorded one word spoken by any of them, except by our Lord Jesus only.

This miracle was wrought, 1. *Speedily*, nothing intervenes between the command, *Come forth;* and the effect, *he came forth: dictum, factum,* let there be life, and there was life. Thus the change in the resurrection will be in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *1 Cor. xv. 52.* The almighty power that can do it, can do it in an instant; *then shalt thou call, and I will answer;* will come at the call, as Lazarus, here am I. 2. *Perfectly:* He was so thoroughly revived, that he got up out of his grave, as strongly as ever he got out of his bed; and returned not only to life but health. He was not raised to serve a present turn, but to live as other men. 3. With this additional miracle (as some reckon it) that he came out of his grave, though he was fettered with his grave clothes, with which he was bound hand and foot, and his face bound about with a napkin; for so the manner of the Jews was to bury; and he came forth in the same dress wherein he was buried, that it might appear it was he himself, and not another, and that he was not only alive, but strong, and able to walk, after a sort, even in his grave-clothes. The binding of his face with a napkin, proved that he had been

really dead, for otherwise, in less than so many days time, that would have smothered him. And the students by in unbinding him would handle him, and see him, that it was he himself, and so be witnesses of the miracle. Now see here, (1.) How little we carry away with us when we leave the world, only a winding sheet and a coffin; there is no change of raiment in the grave, nothing but a single suit of grave clothes. (2.) What condition we shall be in, in the grave. What wisdom or device can there be, when the eyes are hood-winked, or what working, when the hands and feet are fettered! and so it will be in the grave whither we are going. Lazarus being come forth, hampered and embarrassed with his grave-clothes, we may well imagine that those about the grave were exceedingly surprised and frightened at it, we would be so, if we should see a dead body rise; but Christ, to make the thing familiar, sets them to work, loose him, slacken his grave clothes, that they may serve for day clothes till he comes to his house, and then he will go himself so clad, without guide or supporter to his own house. As in the Old Testament, the translations of Enoch, and Elias were sensible demonstrations of an invisible and future state, the one about the middle of the patriarchal age, the other of the Mosiacal economy; so the resurrection of Lazarus was in the New Testament designed for the confirmation of the doctrine of the resurrection.

45. ¶ Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. 46. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done, 47. ¶ Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees, a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. 48. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. 49. And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, 50. Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. 51. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation. 52. And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. 53. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. 54. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples. 55. ¶ And the Jews passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves. 56. Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast? 57. Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him.

We have here an account of the consequences of this glorious miracle which were as usual; to some it was a saviour of life unto life, to others of death unto death.

1. Some were invited by it, and induced to believe. Many of the Jews when they saw the things that Jesus did, believed on him, and well they might, for it was an incontestible proof of his divine mission. They had often heard of his miracles, and yet evaded the conviction of them, by calling in question the matter of fact; but now they had themselves seen this done, their unbelief was conquered, and they yielded at last; But blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed. The more we see of Christ, the more cause we shall see to love him, and confide in him. These were some of those Jews that came to Mary to comfort her. When we are doing good offices to others, we put ourselves in the way of receiving favours from God, and have opportunities of getting good when we are doing good.

2. Others were irritated by it, and hardened in their unbelief.

1. The informers were so, ver. 46. Some of them who were eye-witnesses of the miracle were so far from being convinced that they went to the Pharisees, whom they knew to be his implacable enemies, and told them what things Jesus had done; not merely as a matter of news worthy their notice, much less an inducement to them to think more favourably of Christ, but with a spiteful design to excite who needed no spur the more vigorously to prosecute him. Here is a strange instance, 1. of a most obstinate infidelity, refusing to yield to the most powerful means of conviction, and it is hard to imagine how they could evade the force of this evidence, but that the god of this world had blinded their eyes. 2. Of a most inveterate enmity: If they would not be satisfied that he was to be believed in as the Christ, yet one would think they should have been mollified, and persuaded not to persecute him; but if the water be not sufficient to quench the fire, it will inflame it. They told what Jesus had done, and told no more but what was true; but their malice gave a tincture of diabolism to their information equal to that of lying; perverting what is true is as bad as forging what is false. *Doeg* is called a false, lying, and deceitful tongue. *Psal. cxx. 2, 3.—liii. 2, 3, 4.* though what he said was true.

2. The judges, the leaders, the blind leaders of the people were no less exasperated by the report made to them, and here we are told what they did.

1. A special counsel is called and held, ver. 47. Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees a council, as was foretold, *Psal. ii. 2.* The rulers take council together against the Lord. Consults of the Sanhedrin were intended for the public good, but here under colour of that the greatest injury and mischief is done to the people. The things that belong to the nation's peace were hid from the eyes of those that were intrusted with its counsels. This council was called, not only for joint advice, but for mutual irritation that as iron sharpens iron, and as coals are burning to coals, and wood to fire, so they might exasperate and inflame one another with enmity and rage against Christ and his doctrine.

2. The case is proposed, and shewed to be weighty, and of mighty consequence.

1. The

1. The matter to be debated was, what course they should take with this Jesus to stop the growth of his interest; they said, *What do we?* for this man doth many miracles. The information given about the raising of Lazarus was produced, and the men, brethren, and fathers, are called in to help as solicitously as if a formidable enemy had been with an army in the bowels of their country. (1.) They own the truth of Christ's miracles, and that he had wrought many of them; they are therefore witnesses against themselves, for they acknowledged his credentials, and yet denied his commission. (2.) They consider what was to be done, and chide themselves that they had not done something sooner effectually to crush him. They do not take it at all into their consideration, whether they should not receive him and own him as the Messiah, though they professed to expect him, and Jesus gave pregnant proofs of his being so; but they take it for granted he is an enemy, and as such he is to be run down. *What do we?* Have we no care to support our church? Is it nothing to us that a doctrine so destructive to our interest spreads thus? Shall we tamely yield up the ground we have got in the affections of the people? Shall we see our authority brought into contempt, and the craft by which we get our living ruined, and not bestir ourselves? What have we been doing all this while? and what are we now thinking of? Shall we be always talking and bring nothing to pass?

2. That which made this matter weighty, was the peril they apprehended their church and nation to be in from the Romans, ver. 48. If we do not silence him, and take him off, all men will believe in him; and this being the setting up of a new king, the Romans will take umbrage at it, and will come with an army and take away our place and nation, and therefore it is no time to trifle. See what an opinion they have,

2. Of their own power. They speak as if they thought Christ's progress and success in his work depended upon their connivance, as if he could not go on to work miracles and make disciples, unless they let him alone, as if it were in their power to conquer him who had conquered death; or as if they could fight against God and prosper. But he that sits in heaven laughs at the fond conceit, which impotent malice has of its own omnipotence.

2. Of their own politics. They fancy themselves to be men of mighty insight and foresight, and great sagacity in their moral prognostications.

1. They take on them to prophesy, that in a little time if he have liberty to go on, all men will believe in him, hereby owning when it was to serve their purpose, that his doctrine and miracles had a very convincing power in them, such as could not be resisted, but that all men would become his proselytes and votaries; thus do they now make his interest formidable, though to serve another turn, these same men strove to make it contemptible, John vii. 49. Have any of the rulers believed on him? This was the thing they were afraid of, that men would believe on him, and then all their measures were broke. Note, The success of the gospel is the dread of its adversaries; if souls be saved they are undone.

2. They foretel that if the generality of the nation be drawn after him, the rage of the Romans will be drawn upon them. They will come and take away our place: the country in general, especially Jerusalem, or the temple, the holy place, and their place; their darling, their idol. Or, their preferences in the temple, their places of power and trust.

Now it was true that the Romans had a very jealous eye upon them, and knew they wanted nothing but power and opportunity to shake off their yoke. It was likewise true, that the Romans should pour an army in upon them, it would be very hard for them to make any head against it; yet here appeared a cowardice, which one would not have found in the priests of the Lord, if they had not by their wickedness forfeited their interest in God, and all good men. Had they kept their integrity they needed not to have feared the Romans, but they speak like a dispirited people, as the men of Judah, when they basely said to Samson, knowest thou not that the Philistines rule over us? Judges xv. 11. When men lose their piety, they lose their courage.

But, 1. It was false that there was any danger of the Romans being irritated against their nation by the progress of Christ's gospel, for it was no way hurtful to kings or provinces, but highly beneficial. The Romans had no jealousy at all of his growing interest, for he taught men to give tribute to Caesar, and not to resist evil, but to take up the cross. The Roman governor at his trial could find no fault with him. There was no more danger of the Romans being incensed against the Jewish nation by the priests than by Christ. Note, Pretended fears are often the colour of malicious designs.

2. Had there really been some danger of displeasing the Romans by tolerating Christ's preaching, yet they would not justify their hating and persecuting a good man. Note, 1. The enemies of Christ and his gospel have often covered their enmity with a seeming care for the public good and the common safety, and in order to that have branded his prophets and ministers as troublers of Israel, and men that turn the world upside down; 2. Carnal policy commonly sets up reasons of state, in opposition to rules of justice. When men are concerned for their own wealth and safety more than for truth and duty, it is wisdom from beneath, which is earthly, sensual, and devilish. But see what was the issue, they pretended to be afraid that their tolerating Christ's gospel would bring desolation upon them by the Romans, and therefore, right or wrong, set themselves against it; but it proved that their persecuting the gospel, brought upon them that which they feared, filled up the measure of their iniquity, and the Romans came and took away their place and nation, and their place know them no more. Note, That calamity which we seek to escape by sin, we take the most effectual course to bring upon our heads; and they who think by opposing Christ's kingdom to secure or advance their own secular interest, will find Jerusalem a more burdensome stone than they think it is, Zeck. xii. 3. The fear of the wicked it shall come upon them.

3. Caiaphas makes a malicious but mystical speech in the council upon this occasion.

1. The malice of it appears evident at first view, ver. 49, 50. He being the high priest, and so president of the council, took upon him to decide the matter before it was debated; you know nothing at all, your hesitating betrays your ignorance, for it is not a thing that will bear dispute, it is soon determined, if you consider that received maxim, That it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people. Here,

1. The counsellor was Caiaphas, who was high priest that same year. The high priesthood was by the divine appointment settled upon the heir male of the house of Aaron for and during the term of his natural life, and then to his heir male, but in those degenerate times it was become, though not an annual office, like a consulship, yet frequently changed, as they could make an interest with the Roman powers. Now it happened that this year Caiaphas wore the mitre.

2. The drift of the advice was in short this, that some way or other must be found out to put Jesus to death. We have reason to think that they strongly suspected him to be indeed the Messiah: but his doctrine was so contrary to their darling traditions and secular interest, and his design did so thwart their notions of the Messiah's kingdom, that they resolve, be he who he will, he must be put to death. Caiaphas doth not say, let him be silenced, imprisoned, banished, though that is sufficient for the restraint of one they thought dangerous; but die he must. Note, Those that have set

themselves against Christianity have commonly divested themselves of humanity, and been infamous for cruelty.

3. This is plausibly insinuated, with all the subtlety as well as malice of the old serpent.

(1.) He suggests his own sagacity, which we must suppose him as high priest to excel in, though the *Urim* and *Thummin* was long since lost. How scornfully doth he say, *You know nothing*. that are but common priests; but you must give me leave to see further into things than you do. Thus it is common for those in authority to impose their corrupt dictates by virtue of that; and because they should be the wisest and best, to expect that every body should believe they are so.

(2.) He takes it for granted, that the case is plain, and past dispute, and those are very ignorant that do not see it to be so. Note, Reason and justice are often run down with a high hand: *Truth is fallen in the streets*, and when it is down, down with it; and equity cannot enter; and when it is out, out with it, Isa. lix. 14.

(3.) He insists upon a maxim in politics, that the welfare of communities is to be preferred before that of particular persons. It is expedient for us as priests, whose all lies at stake, that one man die for the people. Thus far it holds true that it is expedient, and more than so, it is truly honourable, for a man to hazard his life in the service of his country; Phil. ii. 17. 1 John iii. 16. but to put an innocent man to death, under colour of consulting the public safety, is the devil's politics. Caiaphas craftily insinuates that the greatest and best man, though *major singulis* is *minor universis*, and ought to think his life well spent, nay well lost, to save his country from ruin, but what is this to the murdering of one that was evidently a great blessing, under pretence of preventing an imaginary mischief to the country? The case ought to have been put thus: Was it expedient for them to bring upon themselves and upon their nation the guilt of blood, a prophet's blood for the securing of their civil interests from a danger which they had no just reason to be afraid of? Was it expedient for them to drive God and their glory from them, rather than venture the Romans' displeasure, who could do them no harm if they had God on their side. Note, Carnal policy, which steers only by secular considerations, while it thinks to save all by sin, ruins all at last.

2. The mystery that was in this counsel of Caiaphas doth not appear at first view, but the evangelist leads us into it, ver. 51, 52. This spake he not of himself, it was not only the language of his own enmity and policy, but in these words he prophesied, though he himself was not aware of it. That Jesus should die for that nation. Here is a precious comment upon a pernicious text: the counsel and cursed Caiaphas so construed as to fall in with the counsels of the blessed God. Charity teaches us to put the most favourable construction upon men's words and actions that they will bear; but piety teacheth us to make a good improvement of them, even contrary to that which they were intended for. If wicked men in what they do against us, are God's hand to humble and reform us, why may they not in what they say against us be God's mouth to instruct and convince us? But in this of Caiaphas there was an extraordinary direction of heaven prompting him to say that which was capable of a very sublime sense. As the hearts of all men are in God's hands, so are their tongues. They are deceived who say our tongues are our own, so that either we may say what we will, and are not accountable to God's judgment, or we can say what we will, and are not restrainable by his providence and power. Balaam could not say what he would when he came to curse Israel, nor Laban, when he pursued Jacob.

The evangelist explains and enlarges upon Caiaphas's words.

1. He explains what he said, and shews how it not only was, but was intended to be accommodated to an excellent purpose. He did not speak it of himself; as it was an artifice to stir up the council against Christ, he spoke it of himself, or of the devil rather; but as it was an oracle, declaring it the purpose and design of God, by the death of Christ to save God's spiritual Israel from sin and wrath, he did not speak it of himself; for he knew nothing of the matter, he meant not so, neither did his heart think so, for nothing was in his heart but to destroy and cut off, Isa. x. 7.

(1.) He prophesied, and those that prophesied in their prophesying, did not speak of themselves. But is Caiaphas also among the prophets? He is so, *pro hac vice*, though an ill man and implacable enemy to Christ and his gospel. Note, 1. God can and often doth make wicked men instruments to serve his own purposes, even contrary to their own intentions, for he has them not only in a chain to restrain them from doing the mischief they would, but in a bridle to lead them to do the service they would not. 2. Words of prophecy in the mouth are no infallible evidence of a principle of grace in the heart. Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? will be rejected as a frivolous plea.

(2.) He prophesied, being high priest that year, not that his being high priest did at all dispose or qualify him to be a prophet; we cannot suppose the pontifical mitre to have first inspired with a prophesy the basest head that ever wore it; but, (1.) Being high priest, and therefore of note and eminence in the conclave, God was pleased to put this significant word into his mouth, rather than into the mouth of any other, that it might be the more observed, or the non-observance of it the more aggravated.

The apophthegms of great men have been thought worthy of special regard; *A divine sentence is in the lips of the king*: therefore this divine sentence was put into the lips of the high priest, that even out of his mouth this word might be established, that Christ died for the good of the nation, and not for any iniquity in his hands. He happened to be high priest that year which was fixed to be the year of the redeemed, when Messiah the prince must be cut off, but not for himself, Dan. ix. 26. and he must own it. (2.) Being high priest that year, that famous year, in which there was to be such a plentiful effusion of the Spirit, more than had ever been yet, according to the prophecy, Joel ii. 28, 29. compared with Acts ii. 17. some drops of the blessed shower light upon Caiaphas, as the crumbs (saith Dr. Lightfoot) of the children's bread which fall from the table among the dogs. This year was the year of the expiration of the Levitical priesthood; and out of the mouth of him who was that year high priest, was extorted an implicit resignation of it to him, who should not (as they had done for many ages) offer beasts for that nation, but offer himself, and so make an end of the sin-offering. This resignation he made unwittingly, as Israel gave the blessing to Jacob.

(3.) The matter of this prophecy was, that Jesus should die for that nation, the very thing to which all the prophets bare witness, who testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, 1 Pet. i. 11. That the death of Christ must be the life and salvation of Israel: he meant by that nation, those in it that obstinately adhered to Judaism; but God meant those in it that would receive the doctrine of Christ, and become followers of him, all believers, the spiritual seed of Abraham. The death of Christ, which Caiaphas was now projecting, proved the ruin of that interest in the nation, which he intended should be the security and establishment of it, for he brought wrath upon them to the uttermost; but it proved the advancement of that interest, which he hoped it would have been the ruin of, for Christ being lifted up from the earth, drew all men unto him. It is a great thing that is here prophesied; that Jesus should die, die for others, not only for their good, but in their stead.

die for that nation, for they had the first offer made them of salvation by his death. If the whole nation of the Jews had unanimously believed in Christ, and received his gospel, they had been not only saved eternally, but saved as a nation from their grievances. The fountain was first opened to the house of David, Zech. xiii. 1. He so died for that nation, as that the whole nation should not perish, but that a remnant should be saved, Rom. xi. 5.

2. The evangelist enlargeth upon this word of Caiaphas, *ver. 52.* not for that nation only, how much soever it thought itself the darling of heaven; but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Observe here,

1. The persons Christ died for: not for the nation of the Jews only; it would have been comparatively but a light thing for the Son of God to go through so vast an undertaking, only to restore the preserved of Jacob, and the outcasts of Israel; no, he must be salvation to the ends of the earth, Isa. xlix. 6. He must die for the children of God that were then in being, scattered abroad in the Gentile world, *devout men* of every nation, *Acts ii. 5.* that feared God, *Acts x. 2.* and worshipped him, *Acts xvi. 4.* proselytes of the gate, who served the God of Abraham, but submitted not to the ceremonial law of Moses: persons that had a savour of natural religion, but were dispersed in the nations, had no solemn assemblies of their own, nor any peculiar profession to unite in, or distinguish themselves by. Now Christ died to incorporate these in one great society, to be denominated from him, and governed by him; and this was the setting up a standard, to which all that had a regard to God and a concern for their souls, might have recourse, and under which they might list themselves. 2. Others take in with these all that belong to the election of grace, who are called the children of God, though not yet born, because they are predestinated to the adoption of children, *Eph. i. 5.* Now these are scattered abroad in several places of the earth, out of all kindreds and tongues, *Rev. vii. 9.* And in several ages of the world, to the end of time; there are those that fear him throughout all generations, to all those he had an eye in the atonement he had made by his blood; as he prayed so he died, for all that should believe in him.

2. The purpose and intention of his death concerning those persons; he died to gather them in, who wandered; and to gather them together in one, who were scattered; to invite them to him, that were at a distance from him, and to unite them in him, that were at a distance from each other. Christ's dying is,

1. The great attractive of our hearts; for this end he is lifted up to draw men to him. The conversion of souls is the gathering of them into Christ as their ruler and refuge, as the doves to their windows; and he died to effect this. By dying he purchased them to himself, and the gift of the Holy Ghost for them; his love in dying for us is the great loadstone of our love.

2. The great centre of our unity. He gathers them together in one, *Eph. i. 10.* They are one with him, one body, one spirit, and one with each other in him. All the saints in all places and ages meet in Christ, as all the members in the head and all the branches in the root. Christ by the merit of his death, recommended all the saints in one to the grace and favour of God, *Ileb. ii. 11, 13.* And by the motive of his death recommends them all severally to the love and affection one of another, *John xiii. 34.*

4. The result of his debate is a resolve of the council to put Jesus to death, *ver. 53.* From that day they took counsel together to put him to death. They now understand one another's minds, and so each was fixed in his own, that Jesus must die; and it should seem a committee was appointed to sit, *de die in diem*, to consider of it, and to consult about it, and to receive proposals for the effecting of it. Note, The wickedness of the wicked ripens by degrees, *James i. 15.* *Ezek. vii. 10.*

Two considerable advances were now made in their accursed design against Christ. 1. What before they had thought of severally now they jointly concurred in, and so strengthened the hands one of another in this wickedness, and proceeded with the greater assurance. Ill men confirm and encourage themselves and one another in ill practices, by comparing notes; men of corrupt minds bless themselves, when they find others of the same mind: Then the wickedness which before seemed impracticable, appears not only possible, but easy to be effected, *vis milita fortior.* 2. What before they wished done, but wanted a colour for, now they are furnished with a plausible pretence to justify themselves in, which will serve, if not to take off the guilt, that is the least of their care, yet to take off the odium, and so satisfy, if not the personal, yet the political conscience, as some subtilly distinguish. Many will go on very securely in doing an ill thing, as long as they have but something to say in excuse for it. Now this resolution of theirs to put him to death right or wrong, shews that all the formality of a trial which they afterwards brought him upon, was but shew and grimace, they were before determined what to do.

5. Christ hereupon absconded, knowing very well what was the vote of their close cabal, *ver. 54.*

1. He suspended his public appearances, he walked no more openly among the Jews, i. e. among the inhabitants of Judea, who were properly called Jews, especially those at Jerusalem, *ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ.* He did not walk up and down, among them, did not go from place to place preaching and working miracles with that freedom and openness that he had done, but while he staid in Judea, he was there incognito. Thus the chief priests put the light of Israel under a bushel.

2. He withdrew into an obscure part of the country, so obscure that the name of the town he retired to is scarce met with any where else. He went to a country near the wilderness, as if he were driven out from among men, or rather wishing with Jeremiah, that he might have in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men, *Jer. ix. 2.* He entered into a city called Ephraim, some think Ephratah, i. e. Bethlehem, where he was born, and which bordered upon the wilderness of Judah; others think Ephron, or Ephraim, mentioned, *2 Chron. xiii. 19.* Thither his disciples went with him, neither would they leave him in solitude, nor would he leave them in danger. There he continued, *διήρπεν*, there he conversed, he knew how to improve this time of retirement in private conversation, when he had not an opportunity of preaching publicly. He conversed with his disciples, which were his family, when he was forced from the temple, and his *διήρπεν*, or discourses there no doubt were very edifying. We must do the good we can, when we cannot do the good we would.

But why would Christ abscond now? it was not because he either feared the power of his enemies, or distrusted his own power; he had many ways to save himself, and was neither averse to suffering, nor unprepared for it; but he retired, (1.) To put a mark of his displeasure upon Jerusalem, and the people of the Jews. They rejected him, and his gospel, justly therefore did he remove himself and his gospel from them. The prince of teachers was now removed into a corner (*Isa. xxx. 20.*) and there was no open vision of him, and it was a sad presage of that thick darkness which was shortly to come upon Jerusalem, because she knew not the day of her visitation. (2.) To render the cruelty of his enemies against him the more inexcusable. If that which was grievous to them, and thought dangerous to the public,

was his public appearances, he would try whether their anger would be turned away by his retirement into privacy; when David was fled to Gath, Saul was satisfied, and sought no more for him, *1 Sam. xxvii. 4.* But it was the life, the precious life, that these wicked men hunted after. (3.) His hour was not yet come, and therefore he declined danger, and did it in a way common to men, both to warrant and encourage the flight of his servants in the time of persecution, and to comfort those who are forced from their usefulness, and buried alive in privacy and obscurity; the disciple is not better, than his Lord. (4.) His retirement for a while was to make his return into Jerusalem, when his hour was come, the more remarkable and illustrious. This loudened the acclamations of joy with which his well-wishers welcomed him at his next public appearance, when he rode triumphantly into the city.

6. The strict enquiry made for him during his recess, *ver. 55, 56, 57.*

1. The occasion of it was the approach of the passover, at which they expected his presence according to custom, *ver. 55.* The Jews passover was nigh at hand, a festival which shone bright in their calendar, and which there was great expectation of for some time before: this was Christ's fourth and last passover since he entered upon his public ministry, and it might truly be said, as *2 Chron. xxxv. 18.* There never was such a passover in Israel, for in it Christ our passover was sacrificed for us. Now the passover being at hand, many went out of all parts of the country to Jerusalem, to purify themselves. This was either, (1.) A necessary purification of those who had contracted any ceremonial pollution; they came to be sprinkled with the water of purification, and to perform the other rights of cleansing according to the law, for they might not eat the passover in their uncleanness, *Numb. ix. 6.* Thus before our gospel passover we must renew our repentance, and by faith wash in the blood of Christ, and so compass God's altar. Or, (2.) A voluntary purification, or self-sequestration, by fasting and prayer, and other religious exercises, which many that were more devout than their neighbours, spent some time in before the passover, and chose to do it at Jerusalem, because of the advantage of the temple service. Thus must we by solemn preparation set bounds about the mount on which we expect to meet with God.

2. The enquiry was very solicitous; They said what think ye, that he will not come to the feast? *ver. 56.*

1. Some think this was said by those that wished well to him and expected his coming, that they might hear his doctrine and see his miracles. They that came early out of the country, that they might purify themselves, were very desirous to meet with Christ, and perhaps came up the sooner with that expectation, and therefore as they stood in the temple, the place of their purification, they enquired what news of Christ? Could any body give them hopes of seeing him? If there were those, and those of the most devout people, and best affected to religion, who shewed this respect to Christ, it was a check to the enmity of the chief priests, and a witness against them.

2. It should rather seem they were his enemies that made this enquiry after him, who wished for an opportunity to lay hands on him. They seeing the town begin to fill with devout people out of the country, wondered they did not find him among them; when they should have been assisting them that came to purify themselves, according to the duty of their place, they were plotting against Christ. How miserably degenerate was the Jewish church, when the priests of the Lord were become like the priests of the calves, a snare upon Mizpeh, and a net spread upon Tabor, and were profound to make slaughter, *Hosea v. 1, 2.* when instead of keeping the feasts with unleavened bread, they were themselves soured with the leaven of the worst malice? Their asking, What think ye? Will he not come up to the feast? implies, (1.) An invidious reflection upon Christ, as if he would omit his attendance on the feast of the Lord, for fear of exposing himself. If others through irreligion be absent, they are not animadverted upon, but if Christ be absent for his own preservation (for God will have mercy, and not sacrifice) it is turned to his reproach, as it was to David's, that his seat was empty at the feast, though Saul wanted him only that he might have an opportunity of nailing him to the wall with his javelin, *1 Sam. xx. 26, 27.* It is sad to see holy ordinances prostituted to such unholy purposes. (2.) A fearful apprehension they had of missing their game. Will he not come up to the feast? If he do not, our measures are broke, and we are all undone; for there is no sending a pursuivant into the country to fetch him up.

3. The orders issued out by the government for the apprehending of him were very strict, *ver. 57.* The great Sanhedrin issued out a proclamation, strictly charging and requiring, that if any person in city or country knew where he was, pretending that he was a criminal and had fled from justice, they should shew it, that he might be taken, probably promising a reward to any that would discover him, and imposing a penalty on such as harboured him. So that hereby he was represented to the people as an obnoxious, dangerous man, an out-law, whom any one may have a blow at. Saul issued out such a proclamation for apprehending of David, and Ahab of Elijah. See, (1.) How intent they were upon this prosecution, and how indefatigably they laboured in it; now at a time when, if they had any sense of religion and the duty of their function, they would have found themselves something else to do. (2.) How willing they were to involve others in the guilt with them; if any man were capable of betraying Christ, they would have him think himself bound to do it. Thus was the interest they had in the people abused to the worst purposes. Note, It is an aggravation of the sins of wicked rulers, that they commonly make those that are under them instruments of their unrighteousness. But notwithstanding this proclamation, though doubtless many knew where he was, yet such was his interest in the affections of some, and such God's hold of the consciences of others, that he continued undiscovered, for the Lord hid him.

C H A P. XII.

It was a melancholy account which we had in the close of the foregoing chapter, of the disgrace done to our Lord Jesus, when the Scribes and Pharisees proclaimed him a traitor to their church, and put upon him all the marks of ignominy they could; but the story of this chapter balanceth that, by giving us an account of the honour done to the Redeemer, notwithstanding all that reproach thrown upon him. Thus the one was set over against the other. Let us see what honours were heaped on the head of the Lord Jesus, even in the depths of his humiliation. (1.) Mary did him honour, by anointing his feet at the supper in Bethany, *ver. 1—11.* (2.) The common people did him honour with their acclamations of joy, when he rode in triumph into Jerusalem, *ver. 12—19.* (3.) The Greeks did him honour, by enquiring after him with a longing desire to him, *ver. 20—26.* (4.) God the Father did him honour by a voice from heaven, bearing testimony to him, *ver. 27—36.* (5.) He had honour done him by the Old Testament prophets, who foretold the infidelity of those that heard the report of him, *ver. 37—41.* (6.) He had honour done him by some of the chief

chief rulers, whose consciences witnessed for him, though they had not courage to own it, ver. 42, 43. (7.) He claimed honour to himself, by asserting his divine mission, and the account he gave of his errand into the world, ver. 44—50.

1. **T**HEN Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. 2. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. 3. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. 4. Then said one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, 5. Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? 6. This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. 7. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. 8. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always. 9. Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. 10. ¶ But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; 11. Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

In these verses we have,

First, the *kind visit* our Lord Jesus made to his friends at Bethany, ver. 1. He came up out of the country, *six days before the passover*, and took up at Bethany, a town that, according to the computation of our metropolis, lay so near Jerusalem, as to be within the bills of mortality. He lodged here with his friend Lazarus, whom he had lately raised from the dead. His coming to Bethany now may be considered,

1. As a preface to the passover he intended to celebrate, to which relation is had in the date of the time, *Six days before the passover*. Devout men set time apart before, to prepare themselves for that solemnity, and thus it became our Lord Jesus to fulfil all righteousness. And thus he hath set us an example of solemn self-sequestration, before the solemnities of the gospel-passover; let us hear the voice crying, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord*.

2. As a voluntary exposing himself to the fury of his enemies: now his hour was at hand. he came within their reach, and freely offered himself to them, though he had shewed them how easily he could evade all their snares. Note, 1. Our Lord Jesus was voluntary in his sufferings; his life was not forced from him, but resigned; *Lo, I come*. As the strength of his persecutors could not over-power him, so their subtilty could not surprise him, but he died, because he would. 2. As there is a time when we are allowed to shift for our own preservation, so there is a time when we are called to jeopard our lives in the cause of God, as St. Paul when he went bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem.

3. As an instance of his kindness to his friends at Bethany, whom he loved, and from whom he was shortly to be taken away. This was a farewell visit, he came to take leave of them, and to leave with them words of comfort against the day of trial that was approaching. Note, Though Christ depart for a time from his purpose, he will give them intimations that he parts in love, and not in anger. Bethany is here described to be the town where Lazarus was, whom he raised from the dead. That miracle wrought here, put a new honour upon the place, and made it remarkable. Christ came hither to observe what improvement was made of that miracle; for where Christ works wonders, and shews signal favours, he looks after them to see whether the intention of them be answered. Where he has sown plentifully, he observes whether it comes up again.

Secondly, The *kind entertainment* which his friends there gave him; they made him a supper, ver. 2. a great supper, a feast. It is queried, whether this was the same with that which is recorded, *Matt. xxvi. 6, &c.* in the house of Simon; most think they were; for the substance of the story and many of the circumstances agree; but that comes in after what was said *two days before the passover*, whereas this was done *six days before*; nor is it likely that Martha should serve in any house but her own; and therefore I incline with Dr. Lightfoot to think them different; that that in Matthew was on the third day of the passover week, but this here the seventh day of the week before, being the Jewish sabbath, the night before he rode in triumph into Jerusalem: That in the house of Simon, this of Lazarus; these two being the most public and solemn entertainments given him in Bethany. Mary graced them both, with this token of her respect; and what she left of her ointment this first time, when she spent but a pound of it, ver. 3. she used that second time, when she poured it all out, Mark xiv. 3.

Let us see the account of this entertainment.

1. They made him a supper; for with them ordinarily supper was the best meal. This they did in token of their respect and gratitude, for a feast is made for friendship; and that they might have an opportunity of free and pleasant conversation with him, for a feast is made for fellowship. Perhaps in allusion to this and the like entertainments given to Christ in the days of his flesh, it is that he promiseth to such as open the door of their hearts to him, that he will sup with them, Rev. iii. 20.

2. Martha served, she herself waited at table, in token of her great respect to the Master; though a person of some quality, she did not think below her to serve, when Christ sat at meat; nor should we think it a dishonour or disparagement to us to stoop to any service, whereby Christ may be honoured. Christ had formerly reproved Martha for being troubled with much serving. But she did not therefore leave off serving, as some, who when they are reproved for one extreme, peevishly run into another; no, still she served; not as then at a distance, but within hearing of Christ's gracious words, reckoning those happy, who, as the queen of Sheba said concerning Solomon's servants, stood continually before him to hear his wisdom; better be a waiter at Christ's table, than a guest at the table of a prince.

3. Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat. It proved the truth of his resurrection, as it did of Christ's, that they were those who did eat and drink with them, Acts x. 41. Lazarus did not retire into a wilderness after his resurrection, as if when he had made visit to the other world, he must ever

after be a hermit in this; no, he conversed familiarly with people as others did. He sat at meat, as a monument of the miracle Christ had wrought. Those whom Christ had raised up to a spiritual life, are made to sit together with him. See Eph. ii. 5, 6.

Thirdly, The particular respect which Mary shewed him above the rest, in anointing his feet with sweet ointment, ver. 3. She had a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, which probably she had by her for her own use, but the death and resurrection of her brother had quite weaned her from the use of all such things, and with this she anointed the feet of Jesus, and as a further token of her reverence for him, and negligence of herself, she wiped them with her hair, and this was taken notice of by all that were present, for the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. See Prov. xxvii. 16.

Doubtless she intended this as a token of her love to Christ, who had given real tokens of his love to her and her family, and thus she studies what she shall render. Now by this her love to Christ appears to have been,

1. A generous love, so far from sticking at necessary charges in his service, that she is as ingenious to create an occasion of expence in religion, as most are to avoid it. If she had any thing more valuable than other, that must be brought out for the honour of Christ. Note, Those who love Christ truly, love him so much better than this world, as to be willing to lay out the best they have for him.

2. A condescending love. She not only bestowed her ointment upon Christ, but poured it upon him with her own hands, which she might have ordered one of her servants to have done; nay, she did not as usual anoint his head with it, but his feet. True love, as it doth not stick at charges, so it doth not stick at pains in honouring Christ. Considering what Christ had done and suffered for us, we are very ungrateful, if we think any service too hard to do, or too mean to stoop too, whereby he may really be glorified.

3. A believing love; there was faith working by this love, faith in Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, i.e. the Anointed, that being both priest and king, was anointed as Aaron and David were. Note, God's anointed should be our anointed; has God poured on him the oil of gladness above his fellows, let us pour on him the ointment of our best affections above all competitors, by consenting to Christ as our king, we must comply with God's designs, appointing him our head whom he has appointed, Hos. i. 11.

The filling of the house with the pleasant odour of the ointment may intimate to us, (1.) That those who entertain Christ in their hearts and houses bring a sweet odour into them: Christ's presence brings with it an ointment and perfume which rejoice the heart. (2.) Honours done to Christ are comforts to all his friends and followers: they are to God and good men an offering of a sweet smelling savour.

Fourthly, Judas's dislike of Mary's compliment, or token of her respect to Christ, ver. 4, 5. where observe,

1. The person that carped at it was Judas, one of his disciples; not one of their nature, but only one of their number: It is possible for the worst of men to lurk under the disguise of the best profession; and there are many who pretend to stand in relation to Christ, that really have no kindness for him. Judas an apostle, a preacher of the gospel, and yet one that discouraged and checked this instance of pious affection and devotion. Note, It is sad to see the life of religion and holy zeal frowned upon and discountenanced by such as are obliged by their office to assist and encourage it. But this was he that should betray Christ. Note, Coldness of love to Christ, and a secret contempt of serious piety, when they appear in professors of religion, are sad presages of a final apostacy. Hypocrites, by lesser instances of worldliness, discover themselves to be ready for a closure with greater temptations.

2. The pretence with which he covered his dislike, ver. 5. Why was not this ointment, since it was designed for a pious use, sold for three hundred pence, which is 8l. 10s. of our money, and given to the poor? Here is, (1.) A foul iniquity gilded over with a specious and plausible pretence, for Satan transforms himself into an angel of light. (2.) Here is worldly wisdom passing a censure upon pious zeal, as guilty of imprudence and mismanagement. Those who value themselves upon their secular policy, and undervalue others for their serious piety, have more in them of the spirit of Judas than they would be thought to have. (3.) Here is charity to the poor made a colour for opposing a piece of piety to Christ, and secretly made a cloke for covetousness. Many excuse themselves from laying out in charity, under pretence of laying up for charity; whereas if the clouds be full of rain they will empty themselves. Judas asked, Why was not it given to the poor? To which it is easy to answer, because it was better bestowed upon the Lord Jesus. Note, We must not conclude that those do no acceptable piece of service, who do not do it in our way, and just as we would have them; as if every thing must be adjudged imprudent and unfit, which doth not take its measures from us and our sentiments. Proud men think all ill-advised that do not advise with them.

3. The detection and discovery of Judas's hypocrisy herein, ver. 6. Here is the evangelist's remark upon it, by the direction of him who searcheth the earth. This he said, not that he cared for the poor, as he pretended, but because he was a thief, and had the bag.

1. It did not come from a principle of charity: Not that he cared for the poor. He had no compassion towards them, no concern for them: what were the poor to him any further than he might serve his own ends, by being overseer of the poor? Thus some warmly contend for the power of the church, as others for its purity, when perhaps it may be said, not that they care for the church; it is all one to them whether its true interest sink or swim, but under the umbrage of this they are advancing themselves. Simeon and Levi pretended zeal for the circumcision, not that they cared for the seal of the covenant, any more than Jehu for the Lord of hosts, when he said, come, see my zeal.

2. It did not come from a principle of covetousness. The truth of the matter was, this ointment being designed for his Master, he would rather have had it in money, to be put in the common stock, which he was intrusted with, and then he knew what to do with it. Observe,

1. Judas was treasurer of Christ's household, whence some think he was called Iscariot, the bag-bearer.

1. See what estate Jesus and his disciples had to live upon; it was but little; they had neither farms nor merchandise, neither barns nor store-houses, only a bag; or, as some think, the word signifies a box, or coffer, wherein they kept just enough for their subsistence, giving the overplus, if any were, to the poor; this they carried about with them wherever they went; omnia mea mecum porto. This bag was supplied by the contributions of good people, and the master and his disciples had all in common: let this lessen our esteem of worldly wealth, and deaden us to the punctilios of state and ceremony, and reconcile us to a mean and despicable way of living, if that be our lot; that it was our Master's lot; for our sakes he became poor.

(2.) See who was the steward of the little they had, it was Judas, he was purse-bearer; it was his office to receive and pay, and we do not find that he gave any account what markets he made. He was appointed to this office, either, 1. Because he was the least and lowest of all the disciples; it was not Peter or John that was made steward, though it was a place of trust and

and profit, but Judas the meanest of them. Note, Secular employments, as they are a diversion, so they are a diminution to a minister of the gospel: see 1 Cor. vi. 4. The prime ministers of State in Christ's kingdom refused to be concerned in the revenue, Acts vi. 2. 2. Because he was *desirous* of the place. He loved in his heart to be fingering money, and therefore had the money-bag committed to him, either, 1. As a *kindness*, to please him, and thereby oblige him to be true to his Master. Subjects are sometimes disaffected to the government, because baulked in their preferment; but Judas has no cause to complain of that, the bag he chose, and the bag he had. Or, 2. In *judgment* upon him, to punish him for his secret wickedness, that was put into his hands, which would be a snare and trap to him. Note, Strong inclinations to sin within, are often justly punished with strong temptations to sin without: We have little reason to be *fond* of the bag or *proud* of it, for at the best we are but *stewards* of it: and it was Judas, one of an ill character, and born to be hanged, (pardon the expression) that was *steward of the bag*; the *prosperity of fools destroys them*.

2. Being trusted with the bag, he was a *thief*, i. e. he had a thievish disposition. The reigning love of money is *heart-theft*, as much as anger and revenge is *heart-murder*. Or, perhaps he had been really guilty of embezzling his Master's stores, and converting them to his own use which were given to the public stock. And some conjecture, that he was now contriving to fill his pockets, and then *run away* and leave his Master, having heard him speak so much of troubles approaching, which he could by no means reconcile himself to. Note, They to whom the management and disposal of public money is committed, have need to be governed by steady principles of justice and honesty, that no blot cleave to their hands: for though some make a jest of cheating the government, or the church, or the country, if cheating be thieving, and communities being more considerable than particular persons, if robbing them be the greater sin, the guilt of theft and the portion of thieves will be found no jesting matter. Judas that had betrayed his trust, soon after betrayed his Master.

Fifthly, Christ's justification of what Mary did, ver. 7, 8. *Let her alone*. Hereby he intimated, (1.) His acceptance of her kindness. Though he was perfectly mortified to all the delights of sense, yet as it was a token of her good-will, he signified himself well pleased with it. (2.) His care that she should not be molested in it. *Pardon her*, so it may be read; excuse her this once, if it be an error, it is an error of her love. Note, Christ would not have them censured or discouraged that sincerely design to please him, though in their honest endeavours there be not all the discretion that may be, Rom. xiv. 3. Though we would not do as they do, yet let them alone. For Mary's justification,

1. Christ puts a favourable construction upon what she did, which they that condemned were not aware of. *Against the day of my burying she has kept this*. Or, she has reserved this for the day of my embalming; so Dr. Hammond. You do not grudge the ointment used for the embalming of your dead friends, nor say that should be sold and given to the poor. Now this anointing either was so *intended*, or at least may be so *interpreted*, for the day of my burying is now at hand, and she has anointed a body that is already *as good as dead*. Note, (1.) Our Lord Jesus thought much and often of his own death and burial; it would be good for us to do so too. (2.) Providence doth often so open a door of opportunity to good Christians: and the Spirit of grace doth so open their hearts, as that the expressions of their pious zeal proves to be more *seasonable*, and more *beautiful*, than any foresight of their own could make them. (3.) The grace of Christ puts kind comments upon the pious words and actions of good people, and not only makes the best of what is amiss, but makes the most of what is good.

2. He gives a sufficient answer to Judas's objection, ver. 8. (1.) It is so ordered in the kingdom of providence, that *the poor we have always with us*, some or other that are proper objects of charity, Deut. xv. 11. such there will be as long as there is in this lapsed state of mankind so much folly and so much affliction. (2.) It is so ordered in the kingdom of grace, that the church should not always have the bodily presence of Jesus Christ, *Me ye have not always*, but only now for a little time. Note, We need wisdom when two duties come in competition, to know which to give the preference to, which must be determined by the circumstances. Opportunities are to be improved, and those opportunities first and most vigorously, which are likely to be of the shortest continuance, and which we see most speedily hastening away. That good duty which may be done at any time, ought to give way to that which cannot be done but just now.

Sixthly, The public notice which was taken of our Lord Jesus here at this supper in Bethany, ver. 9. *Much people of the Jews knew that he was there*, for he was the talk of the town, and they came flocking thither; the more because he had lately absconded, and now broke out as the sun from behind a dark cloud.

1. They came to see Jesus, whose name was very much heightened, and made considerable by the late miracle he had wrought in raising Lazarus. They came not to hear him, but to gratify their curiosity with a sight of him here at Bethany, fearing he would not appear publicly as he used to do this passover. They came not to seize him, or inform against him, though the government had prosecuted him to an outlawry, but to see him and shew him respect. Note, There are some in whose affections Christ will have an interest in spite of all the attempts of his enemies to misrepresent him. It being known where Christ was, multitudes came to him. Note, Where the king is, there is the court; where Christ is, there will the gathering of the people be, Luke xvii. 37.

2. They came to see Lazarus and Christ together, which was a very inviting sight. Some came for the confirmation of their faith in Christ, to have the story perhaps from Lazarus's own mouth. Others came only for the gratifying of their curiosity, that they might say they had seen a man who had been dead and buried, and yet lived again; so that Lazarus served for a *shew* these holidays, to those, who like the Athenians, spent their time in telling and hearing new things. Perhaps some came to put curious questions to Lazarus about the state of the dead, to ask what news from the other world; we ourselves have sometimes said, it may be, we would have gone a great way for one hour's discourse with Lazarus: But if any came on this errand, it is probable Lazarus was silent, and gave them no account of his voyage; however, the scripture is silent, and gives us no account of it: and we must not covet to be wise above what is written. But our Lord Jesus was present, who was a much fitter person for them to apply to than Lazarus: for if we hear not Moses and the prophets, Christ and the apostles; if we heed not what they tell us concerning another world, neither would we be persuaded though Lazarus rose from the dead. We have a more sure word of prophecy.

Seventhly, The indignation of the chief priests at the growing interest of our Lord Jesus, and their plot to crush it, ver. 10, 11. They consulted (or decreed) how they might put Lazarus also to death, because that by reason of him, i. e. of what was done to him, not of any thing he said or did, many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus. Here observe,

1. How vain and unsuccessful their attempts against Christ had hitherto been. They had done all they could to alienate the people from him, and exasperate them against him, and yet many of the Jews, their neighbours

their creatures, their admirers, were so overcome by the convincing evidence of Christ's miracles, that they went away from the interest and party of the priests; went off from obedience to their tyranny, and believed on Jesus. And it was by reason of Lazarus, his resurrection put life into their faith, and convinced them that this Jesus was undoubtedly the Messiah and had life in himself, and power to give life. This miracle confirmed them in the belief of his other miracles, which they had heard he wrought in Galilee: what was impossible to him that could raise the dead?

2. How absurd and unreasonable this day's vote was, that Lazarus must be put to death. This is an instance of the most brutish rage that could be; they were like a wild bull in a net, full of fury and laying about them without any consideration: It was a sign they neither feared God, nor regarded man. For,

1. If they had feared God they would not have done such an act of defiance to him. God will have Lazarus to live by miracle, and they will have him to die by malice. They cry, Away with such a fellow, it is not fit he should live, when God had so lately sent him back to the earth, declaring it highly fit he should live; what was this but walking contrary to God? They would put Lazarus to death, and challenge almighty power to raise him again, as if they could contend with God, and try titles with the King of kings. Who has the keys of death and the grave, he or they? O caca militia! Christus, qui sustinere potuit mortuum, non possit occisum? Aug. in loc. Lazarus is singled out to be the object of their special hatred, because God has distinguished him by the tokens of his peculiar love, as if they had made a league offensive and defensive with death and hell, and resolved to be severe upon all deserters. One would think they should rather have consulted how they might have joined in friendship with Lazarus and his family, and by their meditations have reconciled themselves to this Jesus whom they had persecuted; but the God of this world had blinded their mind.

2. If they had regarded man, they would not have done such an act of injustice to Lazarus, an innocent man, to whose charge they would not pretend to lay any crimes. What bands are strong enough to hold those who can so easily break through the most sacred ties of common justice, and violate the maxims which even nature itself teacheth? But the support of their own tyranny and superstition were thought sufficient, as in the church at Rome, not only to justify, but to consecrate the greatest villainies, and make them meritorious.

12. ¶ On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they had heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13. Took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosannah: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. 14. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon: as it is written, 15. Fear not, daughter of Sion; behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. 16. These things understood not his disciples at the first: But when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him. 17. The people therefore that was with him when he had called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. 18. For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. 19. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

This story of Christ's riding in triumph to Jerusalem is recorded by all the evangelists, as worthy of special remark; and in it we may observe,

First, The respects that were paid to our Lord Jesus by the common people, ver. 12, 13. where we are told,

1. Who they were that paid him these respects, much people, ὄχλος πολὺς, a great crowd of those that came up to the feast; not the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but the country people that came from remote parts to worship at the feast; the nearer the temple of the Lord, the further from the Lord of the temple. They were such as came up to the feast. (4.) Perhaps they had been Christ's hearers in the country, and great admirers of him there, and therefore were forward to testify their respects to him at Jerusalem, where they knew he had many enemies. Note, Those that have a true value and veneration for Christ, will neither be ashamed nor afraid to own him before men, in any instance whereby they may do him honour. (2.) Perhaps they were those more devout Jews that came up to the feast some time before to purify themselves; that were more inclined to religion than their neighbours, and those were they that were so forward to honour Christ. Note, The more regard men have to God and religion in general, the better disposed they will be to entertain Christ and his religion, which is not destructive, but perfective of all previous discoveries and institutions. They were not the rulers, or the great men that went out to meet Christ, but the commonalty: some would have called them a mob, a rabble; but Christ has chosen the weak and foolish things, 1 Cor. i. 27. and is honoured more by the multitude, than by the magnificence of his followers, for he values men by their souls, not their names and titles of honour.

2. On what occasion they did it; They heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. They had enquired for him, chap. xi. 55, 56. Will he not come up to the feast? And now they hear he is coming, for none that seek Christ, seek in vain. Now when they heard he was coming, they bestirred themselves to give him an agreeable reception. Note, Tidings of the approach of Christ and his kingdom should awaken us to consider what is the work of the day, that it may be done in the day. Israel must prepare to meet their God, Amos iv. 12. and the virgins to meet the bridegroom.

3. In what way they expressed their respects; they had not the keys of the city to present to him, nor the sword or mace to carry before him, none of the city music to compliment him with, but such as they had they gave him; and even this despicable crowd was a faint resemblance of that glorious company which John saw before the throne, and before the Lamb, Rev. vii. 9, 10. Though these were before the throne, they were before the Lamb, the paschal lamb, who now, according to the usual ceremony, four days before the feast, was set apart to be sacrificed for us. There it is said of that celestial choir,

2. That they had palms in their hands, and so had these branches of palm trees. The palm-tree has ever been an emblem of victory and triumph; Cicero calls one that had won many prizes, plurimarum, palmarum homo. Christ was now by his death to conquer principalities, and powers, and therefore it was fit he should have the victor's palm borne before him; though he was but girding on the harness, yet he could boast as though he had

had put it off. But this was not all, the carrying of palm-branches was part of the ceremony of the feast of tabernacles, *Lev. xxiii. 40. Nehem. viii. 15.* and their using of this expression of joy, in the welcome given to our Lord Jesus, intimates, that all the feasts pointed at his gospel, had their accomplishment in it, and particularly that of the feast of tabernacles, *Zech. xiv. 16.*

2. That they cried with a loud voice, saying, *Salvation to our God,* *Rev. vii. 10.* so did these here, they shouted before him as is usual in popular welcomes, *Hosanna, blessed is the king of Israel that comes in the name of the Lord;* and *hosanna* signifies *salvation.* It is fetched from *Psal. cxviii. 25, 26.* See how well acquainted these common people were with the scripture, and how pertinently they apply it to the Messiah. High thoughts of Christ will be best expressed in scripture words. Now in their acclamations,

1. They acknowledge our Lord Jesus to be the King of Israel, that comes in the name of the Lord. Though he went now in poverty and disgrace, yet, contrary to the notions their Scribes had given them of the Messiah, they own him to be a king, which speaks both his dignity and honour, which we must adore; and his dominion and power, which we must submit to. They own him to be, 1. A rightful King, coming in the name of the Lord, *Psal. ii. 6.* sent of God, not only as a prophet, but as a king. 2. The promised and long expected King, Messiah, the Prince, for he is King of Israel. According to the light they had, they proclaimed him king of Israel in the streets of Jerusalem; and they themselves being Israelites, hereby they avouched him for their king.

2. They heartily wish well to his kingdom, that is the meaning of *hosanna*; let the King of Israel prosper, as when Solomon was crowned, they cried, *God save King Solomon,* *1 Kings i. 38.* In crying *hosanna* they prayed for three things. (1.) That his kingdom might come, in the light and knowledge of it, and in the power and efficacy of it. God speed the gospel-plough. (2.) That it might conquer, and be victorious over all opposition, *Rev. vi. 2.* (3.) That it might continue. *Hosanna* is, *Let the King live for ever;* though his kingdom may be disturbed, let it never be destroyed, *Psal. lxxii. 17.*

3. They bid him welcome into Jerusalem; welcome as they might say; *welcome is he that cometh;* we are heartily glad to see him; *come in, thou blessed of the Lord;* and well may we attend him with our blessings, who meets us with his. This welcome is like that, *Psal. xxiv. 7-9. Lift up your heads, O ye gates.* Thus we must every one of us bid Christ welcome into our hearts, that is, we must praise him, and be well pleased in him. As we should be highly pleased with the being and attributes of God, and his relation to us, so we should be with the person and offices of the Lord Jesus, and his mediation between us and God. Faith saith, *Blessed is he that comes.*

Secondly, The posture Christ put himself into for the receiving of the respects that were paid him; *ver. 14. When he had found, or procured a young ass, he sat thereon:* it was but a poor sort of figure he made, he alone upon an ass, and a crowd of people about him shouting *Hosanna.*

1. This was much more of state than he used to take, he used to travel on foot, but now was mounted. Though his followers should be willing to take up with mean things, and not affect any thing that looks like grandeur, yet it is allowed them to use the service of the inferior creatures, according as God in his providence gives particular possession of that, over which, by his covenant with Noah and his sons, he has given to man a general dominion.

2. Yet it was much less of state than the great ones of the world use to take. If he would have made a public entry, according to the state of a man of high degree, he should have rode in a chariot like that of Solomon's, *Cant. iii. 2, 10. With pillars of silver, the bottom of gold, and the covering of purple:* but if we judge according to the fashion of this world, to be introduced thus was rather a disparagement than any honour to the King of Israel, for it seemed as if he would look great and knew not how. His kingdom was not of this world, and therefore came not with outward pomp. He was now humbling himself, but in his exalted state John sees him in a vision on a white horse, with a bow and a crown.

Thirdly, The fulfilling of the scripture in this, *As it is written, fear not, daughter of Zion,* *ver. 15.* This is quoted from *Zech. ix. 9.* To him bare all the prophets witness, and particularly to this concerning him.

1. It was foretold that Zion's King should come, should come thus, sitting on an ass's colt; even this minute circumstance was foretold, and Christ took care it should be punctually fulfilled. Note, 1. Christ is Zion's King: the holy hill of Zion was of old destined to be the metropolis or royal city of the Messiah. 2. Zion's King doth and will look after her; and come to her; though for a short time he retires, in due time he returns. 3. Though he comes but slowly, an ass is slow paced, yet he comes surely, and with such expressions of humility and condescension, as greatly encourage the addresses and expectations of his loyal subjects. Humble supplicants may reach to speak with him. If this be a discouragement to Zion that her King appears in no greater state or strength, let her know, that though he comes to her riding on an ass's colt, yet he goes forth against her enemies riding on the heavens for help, *Deut. xxxiii. 26.*

2. The daughter of Zion is therefore called upon to hold her King, to take notice of him and his approaches; behold and wonder, for he comes with observation, though not with outward show, *Cant. iii. 11. Fear not.* In the prophecy, Zion is bid to rejoice greatly, and to shout, but here it is rendered *fear not;* unbelieving fears are enemies to spiritual joys; if they be cured, if they be conquered joy will come of course; therefore Christ comes to his people to silence their fears. If the case be so that we cannot reach to the exultations of joy, yet we should labour to get from under the oppressions of fear. Rejoice greatly, at least fear not.

Fourthly, The remark made by the evangelists upon the disciples understanding of this, *ver. 16. They understood not at first why Christ did this,* and how the scripture was fulfilled, but when Jesus was glorified, and thereupon the spirit poured out, then they remembered that these things were written of him in the Old Testament, and that they and others had, in pursuance thereof, done these things to him.

1. See here the imperfection of the disciples now in their infant state, even they understood not these things at first; did not consider when they fetched him the ass, and set him thereon, that they were performing the ceremony of the inauguration of Zion's King. Now observe, (1.) The scripture is often fulfilled by the agency of those who have not themselves an eye to the scripture in what they do, *Isa. xlv. 4.* (2.) There are many excellent things, both in the word and providence of God, which the disciples themselves do not at first understand; not at their first acquaintance with the things of God, while they see men as trees walking, not at the first proposal of the things to their view and consideration. That which afterwards is clear, at first was dark and doubtful. (3.) It well becomes the disciples of Christ when they are grown up to maturity in knowledge, frequently to reflect upon the follies and weaknesses of their first beginning, that free grace may have the glory of their proficiency, and they may have compassion on the ignorant. When I was a child, I spake as a child.

2. See here the improvement of the disciples in their adult state. Though

they had been children they were not always so, but went on to perfection. Observe,

1. When they understood it; when Jesus was glorified; for, 1. Till then they did not rightly apprehend the nature of his kingdom, but expecting it to appear in external pomp and power, and therefore knew not how to apply the scriptures which spoke of it to so mean an appearance. Note, The right understanding of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, of its powers, glories and victories, would prevent our misinterpreting and misapplying the scriptures that speak of it. 2. Till then the Spirit was not poured out who was to lead them into all truth. Note, The disciples of Christ are enabled to understand the scriptures by the same spirit that indited the scriptures. The Spirit of revelation is to all the saints a Spirit of wisdom, *Eph. i. 17, 18.*

2. How they understood it; they compared that prophecy with the event, and put them together, that they might naturally receive light from each other, and so they came to understand both. Then remembered they that these things were written of him by the prophets, consonant to which they were done to him. Note, Such an admirable harmony there is between the word and works of God, that the remembrance of what is written, will enable us to understand what is done; and the observation of what is done will help us to understand what is written. As we have heard, so have we seen. The scripture is every day in the fulfilling.

Fifthly, The reason which induced the people to pay this respect to our Lord Jesus upon his coming into Jerusalem, though the government were so much set against him: It was because of that illustrious miracle he had lately wrought in raising Lazarus.

1. See here what account, and what assurance they had of this miracle; no doubt the city rang of it, the report of it was in all people's mouths. But they who considered it as a proof of Christ's mission, and a ground of their faith in him, that they might be well satisfied of the matter of fact, traced the report to those who were eye-witnesses of it, that they might know the certainty of it by the utmost evidence the thing was capable of. The people therefore that stood by when he called Lazarus out of his grave, being found out and examined, bare record, *ver. 17.* They unanimously averred the thing to be true, beyond dispute or contradiction, and were ready if called to it, to depose it upon oath, for so much is implied in the words *ἐμαρτυροῦντες.* Note, The truth of Christ's miracles was evidenced by incontestable proofs. It is probable those who had seen this miracle did not only assert it to those that asked them, but published it unasked, that this might add to the triumphs of the solemn day; and Christ's coming in now from Bethany, where it was done, would put them in mind of it. Note, They who wish well to Christ's kingdom, should be forward to proclaim what they know that may redound to his honour.

2. What improvement they made of it, and what influence it had upon them, *ver. 18. For this cause, as much as any other, the people met him.* (1.) Some out of curiosity were desirous to see one that had done such a wonderful work. Many a good sermon he had preached in Jerusalem, which drew not such crowds after him as this one miracle did. But, (2.) Other out of conscience, studied to do him honour as one sent of God. This miracle was reserved for one of the last, that it might confirm those which went before, and might gain him this honour just before his sufferings; Christ's works were all not only well done (*Mark vii. 37.*) but well timed.

Sixthly, The indignation of the Pharisees at all this; some of them probably saw, and they all soon heard of Christ's public entry. The committee appointed to find out expedients to crush him thought they had gained their point when he was retired into privacy, and that he would soon be forgotten in Jerusalem, but now rage and fret when they see they imagined but a vain thing.

1. They own that they had got no ground against him; it was plainly to be perceived that they prevailed nothing: They could not, with all their insinuations, alienate the people's affections from him, nor with their menaces restrain them from shewing their affection to him. Note, They who oppose Christ and fight against his kingdom, will be made to perceive that they prevail nothing. God will accomplish his own purposes in spite of them, and the little efforts of their impotent malice. *Ye prevail nothing, &c. &c. &c. you profit nothing.* Note, There is nothing got by opposing Christ.

2. They own that he had got ground. The world is gone after him; there it a vast crowd attending him, a world of people: an hyperbole common in most languages. Yet here, like Caiaphas, ere they were aware, they prophesied that the world would go after him; some of all sorts, some from all parts; nations shall be disciplined. But to what intent was this said? (1.) Thus they express their own vexation at the growth of his interest; their envy makes them fret. If the horn of the righteous be exalted with honour, the wicked see it and are grieved, *Psal. cxii. 9, 10.* considering how great these Pharisees were, and what abundance of respect was paid them, one would think they needed not grudge Christ so inconsiderable a piece of honour as was now done him; but proud men would monopolize honour, and have none share with them, like Haman. (2.) Thus they excite themselves and one another, to a more vigorous carrying on of the war against Christ. As if they should say, dallying and delaying thus will never do. We must take some other and more effectual course, to put a stop to this infection; it is time to try our utmost skill and force before the grievance grows past redress. Thus the enemies of religion are made more resolute and active by being baffled; and shall its friends be disheartened with every disappointment, who knows its cause is righteous, and will at last be victorious?

20. ¶ And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast. 21. The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. 22. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. 23. ¶ And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. 24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. 25. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. 26. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

Honour is here done to Christ by certain Greeks that enquired for him with respect. We are not told what day of Christ's last week this was, probably not the same day he rode into Jerusalem, for that day was taken up in public work, but a day or two after.

First,

First, We are told who they were that did this honour to our Lord Jesus; *certain Greeks among the people, who came up to worship at the feast, ver. 20.* Some think they were *Jews of the dispersion*, some of the twelve tribes that were scattered among the Gentiles, and were called Greeks, Hellenist Jews; but others think they were Gentiles, those whom they called *proselytes of the gate*, such as the eunuch and Cornelius. Pure natural religion met with the best assistance among the Jews, and therefore those among the Gentiles, who were piously inclined, joined with them in their solemn meetings as far as was allowed them. They were devout worshippers of the true God, even among them that were strangers to the commonwealth of Israel. It was in the latter ages of the Jewish church, that there was this flocking of the Gentiles to the temple of Jerusalem; a happy presage of the taking down of the partition-wall between Jews and Gentiles. The forbidding of the priests to accept of any oblation or sacrifice from a Gentile (which was done by Eleazar the son of Ananias, the high priest) Josephus saith, was one of those things that brought the Romans upon them, *De Bello Jud. lib. ii. cap. 30.* Though these Greeks, if uncircumcised, were not admitted to eat the passover, yet they came to *worship at the feast.* We must thankfully use the privileges we have, though there may be others from which we are shut out.

Secondly, What was the honour they did him, they desired to be acquainted with him, *ver. 21.* Being come to worship at the feast, they desired to make the best use they could of their time, and therefore applied themselves to Philip, desiring that he would put them in a way to get some personal converse with the Lord Jesus.

1. Having a desire to see Christ, they were industrious in the use of proper means. They did not conclude it impossible, because he was so much craved to get to speak with him, nor rest in bare wishes, but resolved to try what could be done. Note, They that would have the knowledge of Christ must seek it.

2. They made their application to Philip, one of his disciples. Some think they had acquaintance with him formerly, and that they lived near Bethsaida in Galilee of the Gentiles; and then it teacheth us that we should improve our acquaintance with good people, for our increase in the knowledge of Christ. It is good to know those who know the Lord. But if these Greeks had been near Galilee, it is probable they would have attended Christ there where he mostly resided; therefore I think they applied themselves to him, only because they saw him a close follower of Christ, and he was the first they could get to speak with. It was an instance of the veneration they had for Christ, that they made an interest with one of his disciples for an opportunity to converse with him; a sign they looked upon him as some great one, though he appeared mean. Those that would see Jesus by faith now he is heaven, must apply themselves to his ministers, whom he hath appointed for this purpose, to guide poor souls in their enquiries after him. Paul must send for Ananias, and Cornelius for Peter. The bringing of these Greeks to the knowledge of Christ by the means of Philip, signified the agency of the apostles, and the use made of their ministry in the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith, and the discipling of the nations.

3. Their address to Philip was in short this, *Sir, we would see Jesus.* They gave him a title of respect, as one worthy of honour, because he was in relation to Christ. Their business is, they would see Jesus; not only see his face, that they might be able to say when they came home, they had seen one that was so much talked of: it is likely they had seen him when he appeared publicly; but they would have some free conversation with him, and be taught by him, which it was no easy thing to find him at leisure for, his hands were so full of public work. Now they were come to worship at the feast they would see Jesus. Note, In our attendance upon holy ordinances, and particularly the gospel passover, the great desire of our souls should be to see Jesus: to have our acquaintance with him increased, our dependence on him encouraged, our conformity to him carried on; to see him as ours, to keep up communion with him, and derive communications of grace from him; we miss of our end in coming if we do not see Jesus.

4. Here is the report which Philip made of this to his master, *ver. 22.* He tells Andrew, who was of Bethsaida likewise; and was a senior fellow in the college of the apostles, cotemporary with Peter, and consults him what was to be done; whether he thought the motion would be acceptable or no, because Christ had sometimes said that he was not sent but to the house of Israel. They agree it must be made; but then he would have Andrew go along with him, remembering the favourable acceptance Christ had promised them, in case two of them should agree touching any thing they should ask, *Matt. xviii. 19.* Note, Christ's ministers should be helpful to one another, and concur in helping souls to Christ. *Two are better than one.* It should seem Andrew and Philip brought this message to Christ, when he was teaching in public, for we read, *ver. 29.* of the people that stood by; but he was seldom alone.

Thirdly, Christ's acceptance of this honour done him, signified by what he said to the people hereupon, *ver. 23, &c.* where he foretels both the honour which he himself should have in being followed, *ver. 23, 24.* And the honour which they should have that followed him, *ver. 25, 26.* This was intended for the direction and encouragement of these Greeks, and all others that desired acquaintance with him.

1. He foresees that plentiful harvest in the conversion of the Gentiles, which this was as it were the first fruits of, *ver. 23.* Christ said to those two disciples, who spake a good word for those Greeks, but doubted whether they should speed or no; *The hour is come when the Son of man shall be glorified*, by the accession of the Gentiles to the church, and in order to that he must be rejected of the Jews. Observe,

(1.) The end designed hereby, and that is the glorifying of the Redeemer. And is it so? Do the Gentiles begin to enquire after me? Doth the morning-star appear to them, and that blessed day-spring, which knows its place and time too, doth that begin to take hold of the ends of the earth? Then the hour is come for the glorifying the Son of man. This was no surprise to Christ, but a paradox to those about him. Note, 1. The calling, the effectual calling of the Gentiles into the church of God, greatly redounded to the glory of the Son of man. The multiplying of the redeemed, was the magnifying of the Redeemer. 2. There was a time, a set time, an hour, a certain hour, for the glorifying of the Son of man, which did come at last, when the days of his humiliation were numbered and finished, and he speaks of the approach of it with exultation and triumph; *The hour is come.*

2. The strange way in which this end was to be attained, and that was by the death of Christ, intimated in that similitude, *ver. 24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, you to whom I have spoken of my death and sufferings, that except a corn of wheat fall not only to, but into the ground, and die, and be buried and lost, it abideth alone, and you never see any more of it; but if it die according to the course of nature, otherwise it would be a miracle, it bringeth forth much fruit; God giving to every seed its own body.* Christ is his corn of wheat, the most valuable and useful grain. Now here is,

1. The necessity of Christ's humiliation intimated. He had never been the living quickening head and root of the church, if he had not descended from heaven to this accursed earth, and ascended from earth to the accursed tree, and so accomplished our redemption. He must pour out his soul unto

death, else he cannot divide a portion with the great, *Isa. liii. 12.* He shall have a seed given him, but he must shed his blood to purchase them and purify them, must win them and wear them. It was necessary likewise, as a qualification for that glory, which he was to have by the accession of multitudes to his church; for if he had not by his sufferings made satisfaction for sin, and so brought in an everlasting righteousness, he had not been sufficiently provided for the entertainment of those that should come to him, and therefore must abide alone.

2. The advantage of Christ's humiliation illustrated. He fell to the ground in his incarnation, seemed to be buried alive in the earth, so much was his glory veiled; but that was not all, he died, this immortal seed submitted to the laws of mortality, he lay in the grave like seed under the clods; but as the seed comes up again green and fresh and flourishing, and with great increase; so one dying Christ gathered to himself thousands of living Christians, and he became their root. The salvation of souls hitherto, and henceforward to the end of time, is all owing to the dying of this corn of wheat. Hereby the Father and Son are glorified, the church replenished, the mystical body kept up, and will at length be completed; and when time shall be no more, the captain of our salvation, bringing many sons to glory by the virtue of his death, and being so made perfect by sufferings, shall be celebrated for ever with the admiring praises of saints and angels, *Heb. ii. 10-13.*

2. He foretels and promises an abundant recompence to them who should cordially embrace him and his gospel and interest, and should make it appear they do so by their faithfulness, in suffering for him, or in serving him.

1. In suffering for him, *ver. 25.* He that loves his life better than Christ shall lose it, but he that hates his life in this world, and prefers the favour of God, and an interest in Christ before it, shall keep it unto life eternal. This doctrine Christ must insist on, it being the great design of his religion to wean us from this world, by setting before us another world.

1. See here the fatal consequence of an inordinate love of life; many a man hugs himself to death, and loseth his life by over-loving it. He that so loves his animal life as to indulge his appetite, and make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof, shall thereby shorten his days; shall lose the life he is so fond of, and another infinitely better. He that is so much in love with the life of the body, and the ornaments and delights of it, as for fear of exposing it or them, to deny Christ, he shall lose it, i. e. lose a real happiness in the other world, while he thinks to secure an imaginary one in this. Skin for skin a man may give for his life, and make a good bargain, but he that gives his soul, his God, his heaven for it, buys life too dear, and is guilty of his folly who sold a birth-right for a mess of pottage.

2. See also the blessed recompence of a holy contempt of life. He that so hates the life of the body as to venture that for the preserving of the life of his soul, shall find both with unspeakable advantage in eternal life. Note, (1.) It is required of the disciples of Christ, that they hate their life in this world; a life in this world supposeth a life in the other world, and this is hated when it is loved less than that. Our life in this world includes all the enjoyments of our present state, riches, honours, pleasures, and long life in the possession of them; these we must hate, i. e. despise them as vain and insufficient to make us happy; dread the temptations that are in them, and cheerfully part with them whenever they come in competition with the service of Christ, *Acts xx. 24-xxi. 13. Rev. xii. 11.* See here much of the power of godliness, that it conquers the strongest natural affections, and much of the mystery of godliness, that is the greatest wisdom, and yet makes men hate their own lives. (2.) Those who in love to Christ hate their own lives in this world, shall be abundantly recompensed in the resurrection of the just. He that hateth his life shall keep it, i. e. he puts it into the hands of one that will keep it to life eternal, and restore it with as great an improvement as the heavenly life can make of the earthly one.

2. In serving of him, *ver. 26.* If any man profess to serve me, let him follow me, as a servant doth his master, and where I am, *ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τόπῳ ἔσται*, there let my servant be, so some read it as part of the duty, there let him be to attend upon me; we read it as part of the promise, there shall he be in happiness with me: And lest this should seem a small matter, he adds, *If any man serve me, him will my Father honour*, and that is enough, more than enough. The Greeks desired to see Jesus, *ver. 21.* but Christ lets them know, it was not enough to see him, they must serve him. He did not come into the world to be a shew for us to gaze at, but a king to be ruled by. And he saith this for the encouragement of those who enquired after him to become his servants. In taking servants it is usual to fix both the work and the wages; Christ doth both here.

1. Here is the work which Christ expects from his servants, and it is very easy and reasonable, and such as becomes them.

(1.) Let them attend their Master's motions; *If any man serve me, let him follow me.* Christians must follow Christ, follow his methods and prescriptions, do the things that he saith; follow his example and pattern, walk as he also walked; follow his conduct by his providence and Spirit: We must go whither he leads us, and in the way he leads us; must follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes before us. If any man serve me, i. e. if he puts himself into that relation to me, let him apply himself to the business of my service, and be always ready at my call. Or, if any man do indeed serve me, let him make an open and public profession of his relation to me by following me, as the servant owns his Master by following him in the streets.

(2.) Let them attend their Master's repose; *where I am, there let my servant be to wait upon me.* Christ is where his church is, in the assemblies of his saints, where his ordinances are administered, and there let his servants be, to present themselves before him, and receive instructions from him. Or, where I am to be, in heaven, whither I am now going, there let the thoughts and affections of my servants be, there let their conversation be, where Christ sitteth, *Col. iii. 1, 2.*

2. Here is the wages which Christ promiseth to his servants, and it is very rich and noble.

1. They shall be happy with him; *Where I am there shall also my servants be.* To be with him when he was here in poverty and disgrace would seem but poor preferment, and therefore doubtless he means being with him in Paradise, sitting with him at his table above on his throne there; it is the happiness of heaven to be with Christ there, *John xvii. 24.* Christ speaks of heaven's happiness as if he were already in it, where I am; because he was sure of it, and near to it, and it was still upon his heart, and in his eye. And the same joy and glory which he thought recompence enough for all his services and sufferings, is proposed to his servants as the recompence of theirs. They that follow him in the way, shall be with him in the end.

2. They shall be honoured by his Father; he will make them amends for all their pain and loss, by conferring an honour upon them, such as becomes a great God to give, but far beyond what such worthless worms of the earth could expect to receive. The reward is God himself, who takes the services done to the Lord Jesus as done to himself. The reward is honour, true lasting honour, the highest honour; it is the honour that comes from God. It is said, *Prov. xxvii. 18. He that waits on his master (humbly and diligently) shall be honoured.* Those that wait on Christ God will put honour upon; such as will be taken notice of another day, though now under a veil.

They that serve Christ must humble themselves, and are commonly vilified by the world, in recompense of both which they shall be exalted in due time. Thus far Christ's discourse has reference to those Greeks who desired to see him, encouraging them to serve him; what became of those Greeks we are not told, but are willing to hope that they who thus asked the way to heaven with their faces thitherward found it, and walked in it.

27. ¶ Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. 28. Father, glorify thy name, Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. 29. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. 30. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. 31. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. 33. This he said, signifying what death he should die. 34. The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man? 35. Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. 36. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

Honour is here done to Christ by his Father in a voice from heaven, occasioned by the following part of his discourse, and which gave occasion to a further conference with the people. In these verses we have,

First, Christ's address to his Father upon occasion of the trouble which seized his spirit at this time, *ver. 27. Now is my soul troubled.* A strange word to come from Christ's mouth, and at this time surprising, for it cometh in the midst of divers pleasing prospects, in which one would think he should have said, now is my soul pleased. Note, Trouble of soul sometimes follows after great enlargements of spirit. In this world of mixture and change we must expect damps upon our joy, and the highest degree of comfort to be the next degree to trouble: When Paul had been in the *third heavens* he had a *thorn in the flesh*. Observe,

1. Christ's dread of his approaching sufferings; *now is my soul troubled.* Now the black and dismal scene began, now were the first throws of the travail of his soul, now his agony began, his soul began to be exceeding sorrowful. Note, 1. The sin of our soul was the trouble of Christ's soul, when he undertook to redeem and save us, and to make his soul an offering for our sin. 2. The trouble of his soul was designed to ease the trouble of our souls; for after this, he said to his disciples, *chap. xiv. 1. Let not your hearts be troubled; what need yours be troubled and mine too?* Our Lord Jesus went on cheerfully in his work, in prospect of the joy set before him, and yet submitted to a trouble of soul. Holy mourning is consistent with spiritual joy, and the way to eternal joy. Christ was now troubled, now in sorrow, now in fear, now for a season, but it would not be so always, it would not be so long. The same is the comfort of Christians in their troubles: They are but for a moment, and will be turned into joy.

2. The strait he seems to be in hereupon, intimated in those words, *And what shall I say?* This doth not speak him consulting with any other, as if he needed advice, but considering with himself what was fit to be said now. When our souls are troubled we must take heed of speaking unadvisedly, but debate with ourselves what we shall say. Christ speaks like one at a loss, as if what he should choose he wot not. There was a struggle between the work he had taken upon him, which required sufferings, and the nature he had taken upon him, which dreaded them; between these two he here pauseth, with *what shall I say?* He looked and there was none to help, which put him to a stand. Calvin observes this as a great instance of Christ's humiliation, that he should speak thus like one at a plunge. *Quo se magis exinanivit gloria Dominus, eo dulcentius habebat erga nos amoris specimen.* Thus he was in all points tempted like as we are, to encourage us, when we know not what to do, to have our eyes to him.

3. His prayer to God in this strait; *Father, save me from this hour, &c.* *τῆς ὥρας ταύτης*, out of this hour: praying not so much that it might not come, as that he might be brought through it. *Save me from this hour;* this was the language of innocent nature, and its resentments poured forth in prayer. Note, It is the duty and interest of troubled souls to have recourse to God by faithful and fervent prayer, and in prayer to eye him as a Father. Christ was voluntary in his sufferings, and yet prayed to be saved from them. Note, Prayer against a trouble may very well consist with patience under it, and submission to the will of God in it. Observe, He calls his suffering *this hour*, meaning the expected events of the time now at hand; hereby he intimates, that the time of his suffering was, (1.) A set time, set to an hour, and he knew it. It was said twice before that this hour was not yet come, but it was now so near that he might say it was come: (2.) A short time; an hour is soon over, so were Christ's sufferings, he could see through them to the joy set before him.

4. His acquiescence in his Father's will notwithstanding. He presently corrects himself, and as it were, recalls what he had said, *but for this cause came I to this hour.* Innocent nature got the first word, but divine wisdom and love got the last. Note, They who would proceed regularly must go upon second thoughts. The complainant speaks first, but if we would judge righteously we must hear the other side. The second thought he checked himself, which was, *for this cause came I to this hour;* he doth not silence himself with this, that he could not avoid it, there was no remedy; but satisfies himself with this, that he would not avoid it, for it was pursuant to his own voluntary engagement, and was to be the crown of his whole undertaking; should he now fly off, it would frustrate all that had been done hitherto. Reference is here had to the divine counsels concerning his sufferings, by virtue of which, thus it behoveth him to submit and suffer. Note, This should reconcile us to the darkest hours of our lives, that were all along designed for them; see 1. Thess. iii. 3.

5. His regard to his Father's honour herein. Upon the withdrawing of his former petition he presents another, which he will abide by, *Father, glorify thy name;* to the same purpose with, *Father, thy will be done,* for, God's will is for his own glory: This speaks more than barely a submission

to the will of God, it is a consecration of his sufferings to the glory of God. It was a mediatorial word, and was spoken by him as our surety, who had undertaken to satisfy divine justice for our sin. The wrong which by sin we have done to God, is in his glory, his declarative glory; for in nothing else are we capable of doing him injury. We were never able to make him satisfaction for this wrong done him, nor any creature for us; nothing therefore remained, but that God should get him honour upon us in our utter ruin. Here therefore our Lord Jesus interposed, undertook to satisfy God's injured honour, and he did it by his humiliation; he denied himself in, and divested himself of, the honours due to the Son of God incarnate, and submitted to the greatest reproach. Now here he makes a tender of this satisfaction as an equivalent; *Father, glorify thy name;* let thy justice be honoured upon the sacrifice, not upon the sinner; let the debt be levied upon me, I am solvent, the principal is not; thus he restored that which he took not away.

Secondly, The Father's answer to this address, for he heard him always, and doth still. Observe,

1. How this answer was given, *by a voice from heaven.* The Jews speak much of a *Bath-kol*, the daughter of a voice, as one of those *divers manners* by which God in time past spake to the prophets; but we do not find any instance of his speaking thus to any but to our Lord Jesus; it was an honour reserved for him, *Matt. iii. 17.—xvii. 5.* and here probably this audible voice was introduced by some visible appearance, either of light or darkness, for both have been used as vehicles of the divine glory.

2. What the answer was, it was an express return to that petition, *Father, glorify thy name, I have glorified it already, and I will glorify it yet again.* When we pray as we are taught, *Our Father, hallowed be thy name,* this is a comfort to us, that it is an answered prayer; answered to Christ here, and in him, to all true believers. (1.) The name of God had been glorified in the life of Christ, in his doctrine and miracles, and all the examples he gave of holiness and goodness. (2.) It should be further glorified in the death and sufferings of Christ; his wisdom and power, his justice and holiness, his truth and goodness were greatly glorified; the demands of a broken law were fully answered, the affront done to God's government satisfied for, and God accepted the satisfaction, and declared himself well pleased. What God has done for the glorifying of his own name, is an encouragement to us to expect what he will yet further do. He that has secured the interests of his own glory, will still.

Thirdly, The opinion of the standers-by concerning this voice, *ver. 29.* We may hope there were some among them, whose minds were so well prepared to receive a divine revelation, that they understood what was said, and they bare record of it. But notice is here taken of the perverse suggestion of the multitude, some of them said it thundered, others who took notice that there was plainly an articulate intelligible voice, said, for certain an angel spake to him. Now this shews, 1. That it was a real thing, even in the judgment of those that were not at all affected to him. 2. That they were loth to admit so plain a proof of Christ's divine mission. They would rather say, it was this, or that, or any thing, than that God spake to him in answer to his prayer; and yet if it thundered with articulate sounds (as *Rev. x. 3, 4.*) was not that God's voice? or, if angels spake to him, are not they God's messengers? But thus God speaks once, yea, twice, and man perceives it not.

Fourthly, The account which our Saviour himself gives of this voice.

1. Why it was sent, *ver. 30.* It came not because of me, not merely for my encouragement and satisfaction, then it might have been whispered in his ear privately, but for your sakes. (1.) That all you who heard it may believe that the Father hath sent me, What is said from heaven concerning our Lord Jesus, and the glorifying of the Father in him, is said for our sakes, that we might be brought to submit to him, and rest upon him. (2.) That you my disciples, who are to follow me in sufferings, may therein be comforted with the same comforts that carry me on. Let this encourage them to part with life itself for his sake if they were called to it, that it should redound to the honour of God. Note, The promises and supports granted to our Lord Jesus in his sufferings were intended for our sakes. For our sakes he sanctified himself, and comforted himself.

2. What was the meaning of it: He that lay in the Father's bosom knew his voice, and what was the meaning of it; and two things God intended when he said that he would glorify his own name.

1. That by the death of Christ Satan should be conquered, *ver. 31.* Now is the judgment. He speaks with a divine exultation and triumph. Now the year of my redeemed is come, and the time prefixed for the breaking of the serpent's head, and giving a total rent to the powers of darkness; now for that glorious achievement; now, now, that great work is to be done which has been so long thought of in the divine counsels, so long talked of in the written word, which has been so much the hope of saints, and the dread of devils. The matter of the triumph is,

(1.) That now is the judgment of the world; *xpius*, take it as a physical term, now is the crisis of this world. The sick and diseased world is now upon the turning point, this is the critical day upon which the trembling scale will turn for life or death to all mankind; all that are not recovered by this will be left helpless and hopeless. Or rather, it is a law term, as we take it; now judgment is entered in order to the taking out of execution against the prince of this world. Note, The death of Christ was the judgment of this world. (1.) It is a judgment of discovery and distinction; *judicium discretionis*, so Austin. Now is the trial of this world, for men shall have their character according as the cross of Christ is to them; to some it is foolishness and a stumbling-block, to others it is the wisdom and power of God; of which there was a figure in the two thieves that were crucified with him. By this men are judged what they think of the death of Christ. (2.) It is a judgment of favour and absolution to the chosen ones that are in the world. Christ upon the cross interposed between a righteous God and a guilty world as a sacrifice for sin and a surety for sinners, so that when he was judged, and iniquity laid upon him, and he was wounded for our transgressions, it was as it were the judgment of this world, for an everlasting righteousness was thereby brought in, not for Jews only, but for the whole world, 1. John ii. 1, 2. *Dan. ix. 24.* (3.) It is a judgment of condemnation given against the powers of darkness, see *John xvi. 11.* Judgment is put for vindication and deliverance, the asserting of an invaded right. At the death of Christ there was a famous trial between Christ and Satan, the serpent and the promised seed; the trial was for the world, and the lordship of it; the devil had long borne sway among the children of men, time out of mind, now pleads prescription, grounding his claim also upon the forfeiture incurred by sin: We find him willing to have come to a composition, *Luke iv. 6, 7.* He would have given the kingdoms of this world to Christ; provided he would hold them by, from, and under him; but Christ would try it out with him; by dying he takes off the forfeiture to divine justice, and then fairly disputes the title, and recovers it in the court of heaven: Satan's dominions is declared to be an usurpation, and the world adjudged to the Lord Jesus as his right, *Psalm ii. 6, 8.* The judgment of this world is, that it belongs to Christ and not to Satan; to Christ therefore let us all attain tenants.

2. That now is the prince of this world cast out.

1. It is the devil that is here called the *prince of this world*, because he rules over the men of the world by the things of the world; he is the *ruler of the darkness of this world*, i. e. of this dark world, of those in it that *walk in darkness*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Eph. vi. 12.

2. He is said to be *cast out*, to be now cast out, for whatever had been done hitherto towards the weakening of the devil's kingdom, was done in the virtue of a Christ to come, and therefore is said to be done *now*. Christ *reconciling* the world to God by the merit of his death broke the *power of death*, and cast out Satan as a *destroyer*; Christ *reducing* the world to God by the doctrine of his cross broke the *power of sin*, and cast out Satan as a *deceiver*. The bruising of his heel was the breaking of the serpent's head, Gen. iii. 15. When his oracles were silenced, his temples forsaken, his idols furnished, and the kingdoms of the world become Christ's kingdoms, then was the *prince of the world cast out*, as appears by comparing this with John's vision, Rev. xii. 8, 9, 10, 11, where it is said to be done by the *blood of the Lamb*. Christ's frequent casting of devils out of the bodies of the people, was an indication of the great design of his whole undertaking. Observe, With what assurance Christ here speaks of the victory over Satan: it is as good as done, and even when he yields to death he triumphs over it.

2. That by the death of Christ *souls shall be converted*, and that would be the casting out of Satan. Ver. 32. *If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me*. Where observe two things,

1. The great design of our Lord Jesus, which was to *draw all men to him*, not the Jews only, who had been long in profession a people *near to God*, but the Gentiles also, who had been *afar off*; for he was to be the *desire of all nations*, Hag. ii. 7. and to him must the *gathering of the people be*. That which his enemies dreaded, was, that the world would go after him, and he would draw them to him notwithstanding their opposition. Observe here how Christ himself is all in all in the conversion of a soul. (1.) It is Christ that *draws*; *I will draw*. It is sometimes ascribed to the Father, John vi. 44. but here to the Son who is the *arm of the Lord*. He doth not *drive* by force, but draw with the cords of a man, Hos. xi. 4. Jer xxxi. 3. draws as the loadstone, the soul is *made willing*, but it is in a *day of power*. (2.) It is in Christ that we are drawn, *I will draw them to me as the centre of their unity*. The soul that was at a distance from Christ is brought into an acquaintance with him, that was shy and distrustful of him, is brought to love him and trust him; drawn up to his terms, into his arms. Christ was now going to heaven, and he would draw men's hearts to him thither.

2. The strange method he took to accomplish his design, by *being lifted up from the earth*. What he meant by that, to prevent mistake, we are told, ver. 33. *This he spake signifying by what death he should die*, viz. the death of the cross, though they had designed, and attempted to *stone him to death*. He that was crucified, was first nailed to the cross, and then lifted up upon it. He was *lifted up as a spectacle to the world*; *lifted up between heaven and earth* as unworthy of either; yet the word here used signified an honourable advancement, *exaltation*, *If I be exalted*; he reckoned his sufferings his honour. Whatever death we die, if we die in Christ, we shall be lifted up out of this dungeon, this den of lions, into the regions of light and love. We should learn of our Master to speak of dying with a holy pleasantness, and to say, we shall then be lifted up.

Now Christ's drawing all men to him, following his being *lifted up from the earth*. 1. It followed after it in time. The great increase of the church was after the death of Christ; while Christ lived we read of thousands at a sermon miraculously fed, but it was after his death that we read of thousands at a sermon added to the church which should be saved. Israel began to multiply in Egypt after the death of Joseph. 2. It followed upon it a blessed consequence of it. Note, There is a powerful virtue and efficacy in the death of Christ to draw souls to him. The cross of Christ, though to some it is a *stumbling stone*, to others it is a *load stone*. Some make it an allusion to the drawing of fish into a net; the lifting up of Christ was as the spreading of the net, Matt. xiii. 47, 48. Or to the setting up of a standard, which draw soldiers together; or rather, it refers to the lifting up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness, which drew all those to it that were stung with fiery serpents; as soon as ever it was known that it was lifted up, and there was healing virtue in it, O! what flocking was there to it; so there was to Christ when salvation through him was preached to all nations; see John iii. 14, 15. Perhaps it has some reference to the posture in which Christ was crucified, with his arms *stretched out*, to invite all to him, and embrace all that come. They that put Christ to that ignominious death, thought thereby to drive all men from him; but the devil was outshot in his own bow: *Out of the eater came forth meat*.

Fifthly, The people's exception against what he said, and their cavil at it, ver. 34. Though they had heard the voice from heaven, and the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth, yet they object and pick quarrels with him. Christ had called himself the *Son of man*, ver. 23. which they knew to be one of the titles of the Messiah, Dan. vii. 13. He had also said that the *Son of man must be lifted up*, which they understood of his dying, and probably he explained himself so; and some think repeated what he had said to Nicodemus, John iii. 14. *So must the Son of man be lifted up*. Now against this,

1. They alleged those scriptures of the Old Testament which speak of the perpetuity of the Messiah, that he should be so far from being cut off in the midst of his days, that he should be a *priest for ever*, Psal. cx. 4. and a *king for ever*, Psal. lxxxix. 29, &c. that he should have length of days *for ever and ever*, and his years *as many generations*, Psal. xx. 4.—lxi. 6. from all this they inferred that the Messiah should not die: Thus great knowledge in the letter of the scripture, if the heart be unsanctified, is capable of being abused to serve the cause of infidelity; and to fight against Christianity with its own weapons. Their perverseness in opposing this to what Jesus had said, will appear if we consider, (1.) That when they vouched the scripture to prove that the Messiah *abideth for ever* they took no notice of those texts which spoke of the Messiah's death and sufferings: they had heard out of the law that the Messiah *abideth for ever*, and had they never heard out of the law that the Messiah *shall be cut off*? Dan. ix. 26. and that he shall *pour out his soul unto death*, Isa. liii. 12. and particularly that his *hands and feet should be pierced*; why then do they make so strange of the *lifting up of the Son of man*? Note, We often run into great mistakes, and then defend them with scripture arguments, by putting those things asunder which God in his word has put together; and opposing one truth under the pretence of supporting another. We have heard out of the gospel that which exalts free grace, we have heard also that which enjoins duty, and we must cordially embrace both, and not separate them, or set them at variance. (2.) That when they opposed what Christ said concerning the sufferings of the Son of man, they took no notice of what he had said concerning his glory and exaltation. They had heard out of the law that *Christ abideth for ever*, and had they not heard our Lord Jesus say that he should be glorified; that he should bring forth much fruit, and draw all men to him; had he not just now promised immortal honours to his followers, which supposed his abiding for ever, but this they overlook. Thus unfair

disputants oppose some parts of the opinion of an adversary, which if they would but take intire they could not but subscribe to; and in the doctrine of Christ there are paradoxes, which to men of corrupt minds are stones of stumbling; as Christ *crucified*, and yet *glorified*; *lifted up from the earth*; and yet *drawing all men to him*.

2. They asked hereupon, *Who is the Son of man*? This they asked, not with a desire to be instructed, but tauntingly and insultingly; as if now they had baffled him, and run him down. Thou sayest, *The Son of man must die*; we have proved the Messiah must not, and where is then thy Messiahship? This Son of man, as thou callest thyself, cannot be the Messiah, thou must therefore think of something else to pretend to. Now that which prejudiced them against Christ, was his meanness and poverty; they would rather have no Christ than a suffering one.

Sixthly, What Christ said to this exception, or rather what he said upon it. The objection was a perfect cavil, they might if they pleased answer it themselves. Man *dies*, and yet is *immortal*, and *abideth for ever*, so the *Son of man*; therefore instead of answering these fools according to their folly, he gives them a serious caution to take heed of trifling away the day of their opportunities in such vain and fruitless cavils as these. Ver. 35, 36. *Yet a little while, and but a little while, is the light with you, therefore be wise for yourselves, and walk while ye have light*.

In general we may observe here, (1.) The concern Christ has for the souls of men, and his desire of their welfare. With what tenderness doth he here admonish those to look well to themselves, who were contriving ill against him? Even when he *endured the contradiction* of sinners, he *endeavoured their conversion*. See Prov. xxix. 10. (2.) The method he takes with those objectors; with *meekness instructing those that opposed themselves*, 2 Tim. ii. 25. Were but men's consciences awakened with a due concern about their everlasting state, and did they consider how little time they have to *spend*, and none to *spare*, they would not waste precious thoughts and time in trifling cavils.

Particularly we have here,

1. The *privilege and advantage* they enjoyed in having Christ and his gospel among them, with the shortness and uncertainty of their enjoyment of it. *Yet a little while is the light with you*. Christ is this light; and some of the ancients suggest, that in calling himself the light, he gives a tacit answer to their objection. His dying upon the cross was as consistent with his *abiding for ever*, as the setting of the sun every night is with his perpetuity: The duration of Christ's kingdom is compared to that of the *sun and moon*, Psalm lxxii. 17.—lxxxix. 36, 37. The ordinances of heaven are unchangeably fixed, and yet the sun and moon *set* and are *eclipsed*; so Christ the Sun of righteousness abides for ever, and yet was eclipsed by his sufferings, and was but a little while within our horizon. Now (1.) The Jews at this time had the *light with them*, they had Christ's bodily presence, heard his preaching, saw his miracles. The scriptures is to us a light shining in a dark place. (2.) It was to be but a little while with them; Christ would shortly leave them, their visible church state would soon after be dissolved, and the kingdom of God taken from them, and *blindness and hardness* would happen unto Israel. Note, It is good for us all to consider what a little while we are to have the light with us. Time is short, and perhaps opportunity not so long. The candlestick may be *removed*, however, we must be *removed* shortly. Yet a little while is the light of life with us; yet a little is the light of the gospel with us, the day of grace, the means of grace, the Spirit of grace, yet a very little while.

2. The warning given them to make the best of these advantages while they enjoyed them, because of the danger they were in of losing them. *Walk while ye have the light*, as travellers who make the best of their way forward, that they may not be benighted in their journey, because travelling in the night is uncomfortable and unsafe. Come, say they, let us mend our pace, and get forward while we have day-light. Thus wise should we be for our souls, who are journeying towards eternity. Note, (1.) It is our business to walk, to press forward towards heaven, and to get nearer it by being made fitter for it. Our life is but a *day*, and we have a *day's journey* to go. (2.) The best time of walking is while we have the light. The day is the proper season for work, as the night is for rest. The proper time for getting grace is when we have the word of grace preached to us, and the Spirit of grace striving with us, and therefore then is the time to be busy. (3.) We are highly concerned thus to improve our opportunities, for fear lest our day be finished before we have finished our day's work and day's journey. *Lest darkness come upon you*, lest you lose your opportunities, and can neither recover them, nor dispatch the business you have to do without them. Then *darkness comes*, i. e. such an utter incapacity to make sure the great salvation, as renders the case of the careless sinner quite deplorable; so that if his work be undone, then it is like to be undone for ever.

3. The sad condition of those who have sinned away the gospel, and are come to the period of their day of grace. *They walk in darkness*, and know neither *where* they go nor *whither* they go; neither the way they are walking in, nor the end they are walking towards. He that is destitute of the light of the gospel, and is not acquainted with its discoveries and directions, he *wanders endlessly* in mistakes and errors, and a thousand crooked paths, and is not aware of it. Set aside the instructions of the Christian doctrine, and we know little of the difference between good and evil. He is *going to destruction*, and knows not his danger, for he is either *sleeping or dancing* at the pit's brink.

4. The great duty and interest of every one of us inferred from all this, ver. 36. *While ye have light, believe in the light*. The Jews had now Christ's presence with them, let them improve it; afterwards they had the *first offers* of the gospel made to them by the apostles wherever they came; now this is an admonition to them not to out-stand their market, but to accept the offer when it was made them: The same Christ saith to us all who enjoy the gospel. Note, 1. It is the duty of every one of us to *believe in the gospel light*, to receive it as a divine light, to subscribe to the truths it discovers, for it is a light to *our eyes*; and to follow its conduct, for it is a light to *our feet*. Christ is the light, and we must *believe in him* as he is revealed to us; as a *true light* that will not deceive us; a *sure light* that will not misguide us. 2. We are concerned to do this while we have the light, to lay hold on Christ while we have the gospel to shew us the way to him, and direct us in that way. 3. They that believe in the light *shall be the children of light*, they shall be owned as *Christians*, who are called *children of light*, Luke xvi. 8. Eph. v. 8. and of the day, 1 Thess. v. 5. They that have God for their Father, are children of light, for God is light; that are born from above, and heirs of heaven, and children of light, for heaven is light.

Seventhly, Christ's retiring from them hereupon; *These things spake Jesus*, and said no more at this time, but left this to their consideration, and *departed, and did hide himself from them*. And this he did. (1.) For their conviction and awakening. If they will not regard what he hath said, he will have nothing more to say to them. They are joined to their infidelity, as Ephraim to idols; let them *alone*. Note, Christ justly removes the means of grace from those that quarrel with them, and *hides his face from a forward generation*, Deut. xxxii. 21. (2.) For his own preservation. He hid himself

himself from their rage and fury, retreating, it is probable, to Bethany, where he lodged. By this it appears that what he said irritated and exasperated them, and they were made worse by that which should have made them better.

37. ¶ But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: 38. That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? 39. Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, 40. He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. 41. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

We have here the honour done to our Lord Jesus by the Old Testament prophets, who foretold and lamented the infidelity of the many that believed not on him. It was indeed a dishonour and grief to Christ, that his doctrine met with so little acceptance, and so much opposition; but this takes off the wonder and reproach, makes the offence of it to cease, and made it no disappointment to Christ, that herein the scriptures were fulfilled. Two things are here said concerning this untractable people, and both were foretold by the evangelical prophet Isaiah, that they *did not believe*, and that they *could not believe*.

First, They *did not believe*, ver. 37. Though he had done so many miracles before them, which, one would think, should have convinced them, yet they believed not, but opposed him. Observe,

1. The plenty of the means of conviction which Christ afforded them; he *did miracles*, so many miracles, *ταύτα σημεῖα*, it signifies both so many, and so great. It refers to all the miracles he had wrought formerly, nay the blind and lame now came to him into the temple, and he healed them, *Matt. xxi. 14*. His miracles were the great proof of his mission, and on the evidence of them he relied. Two things concerning them he here insists upon; (1.) The number of them, they were many; various, and of divers kinds; numerous, and often repeated, and every new miracle confirmed the reality of all that went before. The multitude of his miracles was not only a proof of his unexhausted power, but gave the greater opportunity to examine them; and if there had been any cheat in them, it was morally impossible, but that in some or other of them it would have been discovered; and being all miracles of mercy, the more there were, the more good was done. (2.) The notoriety of them. He wrought these miracles before them, not at a distance, not in a corner, but before many witnesses, appearing to their own eyes.

2. The inefficacy of these means, yet they believed not on him. They could not gainsay the premises, and yet would not grant the conclusion. Note, The most plentiful and powerful means of conviction will not of themselves work faith in the depraved prejudiced hearts of men: These saw and yet believed not.

3. The fulfilling of the scripture in this, ver. 38. That the saying of Esaias might be fulfilled. Not that these infidel Jews designed the fulfilling of the scripture, they rather fancied those scriptures, which speak of the church's best sons to be fulfilled in themselves, but the event exactly answered the prediction, so that (ut for ita ut) this saying of Esaias was fulfilled. The more improbable any event is, the more doth a divine foresight appear in the prediction of it. One could not have imagined, that the kingdom of the Messiah, supported with such pregnant proofs, should have met with so much opposition among the Jews, and therefore their unbelief is called a *marvellous work, and a wonder*, *Isa. xxix. 9-14*. Christ himself marvelled at it, but it was what Isaiah foretold, *Isa. liii. 1*, and now it is accomplished. Observe, (1.) The gospel is here called their report. *Who has believed in anon ημῶν*, our hearing, which we have heard from God, and which you have heard from us; our report is the report that we bring, like the report of a matter of fact; or the report of a solemn resolution in the senate. (2.) It is foretold, that few comparatively of those to whom this report is brought, will be persuaded to give credit to it: Many hear it, but few heed it, and embrace it. *Who hath believed it?* Here and there one, but none to speak of; not the wise, not the noble; it is to them but a report which wants confirmation. (3.) It is spoken of as a thing to be greatly lamented, that so few believe the report of the gospel. Lord is here prefixed from the LXX, but it is not in the Hebrew, and it intimates a sorrowful account brought to God by the messengers, of the cold entertainment which they and their report had; as the servant came and shewed his Lord all these things, *Luke xiv. 21*. (4.) The reason why men believe not the report of the gospel is because the arm of the Lord is not revealed to them, i. e. because they do not acquaint themselves with, and submit themselves to the grace of God; they do not experimentally know the virtue and fellowship of Christ's death and resurrection, in which the arm of the Lord is revealed. They saw Christ's miracles, but did not see the arm of the Lord revealed in them.

Secondly, They could not believe, and therefore they could not, because Esaias said, he hath blinded their eyes. This is a hard saying, who can explain it? We are sure is infinitely just and merciful, and therefore cannot think there is in any such an impotency to good, resulting from the counsels of God, as lays them under a fatal necessity of being evil; God damns none by mere sovereignty, yet it is said they could not believe. St. Austin coming in course to the exposition of these words, expresseth himself with a holy fear of entering upon an enquiry into this mystery: *Iusta sunt judicia ejus, sed occulta*. (1.) They could not believe, that is, they would not; they were obstinately resolved in their infidelity; thus Chrysostom and Austin incline to understand it; and the former gives divers instances in scripture of the putting of an impotency to signify the invincible refusal of the will, as *Gen. xxxvii. 4*. They could not speak peaceably to him. And *John vii. 7*. This is a moral impotency, like that of one that is accustomed to do evil, *Jer. x. 23*. But, (2.) They could not because Esaias had said, He hath blinded their eyes. Here the difficulty increaseth; it is certain God is not the author of sin, and yet,

1. There is a righteous hand of God sometimes to be acknowledged in the blindness and obstinacy of those who persist in impenitency and unbelief, by which they are justly punished for their former resistance of the divine light and rebellion against the divine law. If God withhold abused grace, and give men over to indulged lusts; if he permit the evil spirit to do his work on them that resisted the good spirit; and if in his providence he lay stumbling-blocks in sinners way, which confirm their prejudices, then he blinds their eyes and hardens their hearts, and these are spiritual judgments, like the giving up of idolatrous Gentiles to vile affections, and degenerate Christians to strong delusions.

Observe the method of conversion implied here, and the steps taken in it. (1.) Sinners are brought to see with their eyes, to discern the reality of divine things, and to have some knowledge of them. (2.) To understand with their heart, to apply these things to themselves; not only to assent and approve, but to consent and accept. (3.) To be converted, and effectually turned from sin to Christ, from the world and the flesh to God, as their felicity and portion. (4.) Then God will heal them, will justify and sanctify them; will pardon their sins, which are as bleeding wounds, and mortify their corruptions, which are as lurking diseases; now when God denies his grace, nothing of this is done; the alienation of the mind from its aversion to God, and the divine life, grows into a rooted and invincible antipathy, and so the case becomes desperate.

2. This judicial blindness and hardness is in the word of God threatened against those who wilfully persist in wickedness, and was particularly foretold concerning the Jewish church and nation. Known unto God are all his works, and all ours too. Christ knew before who would betray him, and spoke of it, *John vi. 70*. This is a confirmation of the truth of scripture prophecies, and thus even the unbelief of the Jews may help to strengthen our faith. It is also intended for a caution to particular persons, to beware lest that come upon them which was spoken of in the prophets, *Acts xiii. 40*.

3. What God has foretold will certainly come to pass, and so by a necessary consequence, in order of arguing, it might be said, that therefore they could not believe, because God by the prophets had foretold they would not, for such is the knowledge of God that it cannot be deceived in what he foresees; and such his truth, that he cannot deceive in what he foretells, so that the scripture cannot be broken. Yet be it observed, that the prophecy did not name particular persons; so that it might not be said therefore, such a one and such a one could not believe, because Esaias had said so and so; but it pointed at the body of the Jewish nation, which would persist in their infidelity, till their cities were wasted without inhabitants, as it follows, *Isa. vi. 11, 12*, yet still reserving a remnant, ver. 13. in it shall be a tenth. Which reserve was sufficient to keep a door of hope open to particular persons, for each one might say, why may not I be of that remnant?

Lastly, The evangelist having quoted the prophecy, shews, ver. 41. that it was intended to look further than the prophet's own days, and that its principle reference was to the days of the Messiah: These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

1. We read in the prophecy, that this was said to Esaias, *Isa. vi. 8*. But here we are told it was said by him to the purpose. For nothing was said by him as a prophet, which was not first said to him; nor any thing said to him, which was not afterwards said by him, to those to whom he was sent. See *Isa. xxi. 10*.

2. The vision which the prophet here had of the glory of God, is here said to be his seeing the glory of Jesus Christ, he saw his glory. Jesus Christ therefore is equal in power and glory with the Father, and his praises equally celebrated. Christ had a glory before the foundation of the world, and Esaias saw this.

3. It is said that the prophet there spake of him. It seems to have been spoken of the prophet himself, for to him the commission and instructions were there given, and yet it is here said to be spoken of Christ, for as all the prophets testified of him, so they all typified him. This they spake of him, that as to many his coming would be not only fruitless but fatal, a savour of death unto death. It might be objected against his doctrine, if it was from heaven, why did not the Jews believe it? but this is an answer to it; it was not for want of evidence, but because their heart was made fat, and their ears heavy. It was spoken of Christ, that he should be glorified in the ruin of an unbelieving multitude, as well as in the salvation of a distinguished remnant.

42. ¶ Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue. 43. For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Some honour was done to Christ by these rulers, for they believed on him, were convinced that he was sent of God, and received his doctrine as divine; but they did not do him honour enough, for they had not courage to own their faith in him. Many professed more kindness for Christ than really they had, these had more kindness for him than they were willing to profess.

See here what a struggle was in these rulers between their convictions and their corruptions.

1. See the power of the word in the convictions that many of them were under, who did not wilfully shut their eyes against the light. They believed on him as Nicodemus, received him as a teacher come from God. Note, The truth of the gospel hath perhaps a better interest in the consciences of men than we are aware of. Many cannot but approve of that in their hearts, which yet outwardly they are shy of. Perhaps these chief rulers were true believers, though very weak, and their faith like smoking flax. Note, It may be there are more good people than we think there are. Elijah thought he was left alone, when God had seven thousand faithful worshippers in Israel. Some are really better than they seem to be. Their faults are known, but their repentance is not; a man's goodness may be concealed by a culpable yet pardonable weakness, which he himself truly repents of. The kingdom of God comes not in all with a like observation; nor have all they that are good the faculty of shewing it some have.

2. See the power of the world in the smothering of these convictions. They believed in Christ, but because of the Pharisees, who had it in their power to do them a diskindness, they durst not confess him for fear of being excommunicated. Observe here,

1. Wherein they failed and were defective; they did not confess Christ. Note, There is cause to question the sincerity of that faith which is either afraid or ashamed to shew itself; for those who believe with the heart, ought to confess with the mouth, *Rom. x. 8*.

2. What they feared, being put out of the synagogue, which they thought would be a disgrace and damage to them; as if it would do them any harm to be expelled a synagogue, that had made itself a synagogue of Satan, and from which God was departing.

3. What was at the bottom of this fear; they loved the praise of men, chose it as a more valuable good, and pursued it as a more desirable end than the praise of God; which was an implicit idolatry, like that, *Rom. i. 25*, of worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator. They set these two in the scale one against the other, and having weighed them, they proceeded accordingly; (1.) They set the praise of men in one scale, and considered how good it was to give praise to men, and to pay a deference to the opinion of the Pharisees, and to receive praise from men, to be commended by the chief priests, and applauded by the people as good sons of the church, the Jewish church. And they would not confess Christ, lest they should

should thereby *derogate* from the reputation of the Pharisees, and *forfeit* their own, and hark their own preferment. And besides the followers of Christ were put into an *ill-name*, and were looked upon with contempt, which they who had been used to honour could not bear. Yet perhaps if they had known *one another's* minds, they would have had *more courage*; but each one thought, if he should declare himself in favour of Christ, he should *stand alone*, and have no body to back him; whereas if any one had had resolution to *break the ice*, he would have had more *seconds* than he thought of. (2.) They put the *praise of God* in the other scale; they were sensible, that by *confessing Christ*, they should both *give praise to God*, and *have praise from God*, that he would be pleased with them, and say, Well done; but, (3.) They gave the preference to the praise of men, and that turned the scale; sense prevailed above faith, and represented it more desirable to stand right in the opinion of the Pharisees, than to be accepted of God. Note, Love of the praise of men is a very great prejudice to the power and practice of religion and godliness. Many come short of the glory of God, by having a regard to the applause of men, and a value for that. *Love of the praise of men*, as a *by-end* in that which is *good*, will make a man an *hypocrite* when religion is in fashion, and credit is to be got by it; and as a base principle in that which is evil, it will make a man an *apostate*, when religion is in disgrace, and credit is to be lost for it, as here. See Rom. ii. 29.

44. Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. 45. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. 46. I am come a light into a world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. 47. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. 48. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. 49. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. 50. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

We have here the honour of Christ not *assumed* but *asserted* to himself, in the account he gave of his mission and his errand into the world. Probably this discourse was not at the same time with that before, for then he *departed*, ver. 36. but some time after, when he made another public appearance; and as this evangelist records it, it was Christ's *farewell sermon* to the Jews, and his last public discourse; all that follows was *private* with his disciples. Now observe how our Lord Jesus delivered this parting word; he *cried and said*, *Doth not wisdom cry?* Prov. viii. 1. cry *without*, Prov. i. 20. The raising of his voice, and crying, intimates, (1.) His *boldness* in speaking; though they had not courage openly to profess faith in his doctrine, he had courage openly to publish it; if they were ashamed of it, he was not, but set his face as a flint, Isa. i. 7. (2.) His *earnestness* in speaking; he cried as one that was serious and importunate, and in good earnest in what he said, and was willing to impart to them not only the gospel of God, but *even his own soul*. (3.) It denotes his desire, that all might take notice of it. This being the last time of the publication of his gospel by himself in his person, he makes proclamation, whoever will hear me, let them come now.

Now what is this conclusion of the whole matter? This closing summary of all Christ's discourses? It is much like that of Moses, Deut. xxx. 15. See I have set before you life and death. So Christ here takes leave of the temple, with a solemn declaration of three things.

First, The *privileges and dignities* which they have that *believe*; this gives great encouragement to us to believe in Christ, and to profess that faith: It is a thing of that nature, that we need not be either shy of doing it, or shy of owning it; for,

1. By believing in Christ, we are brought into an *honourable acquaintance with God*, ver. 44, 45. He that believeth on me, and so seeth me, believes on him that sent me, and so sees him. He that believes on Christ, (1.) He doth not believe in a *mere man*, such a one as he seemed to be, and was generally taken to be, but he believeth in one that is the *Son of God*, and equal in power and glory with the Father. Or rather, (2.) His faith doth not *terminate* in Christ, but through him it is *carried out* to the Father that sent him; to whom as our end, we come by Christ as our way. The doctrine of Christ is believed and received as the truth of God: The rest of a believing soul is in God through Christ as Mediator; for its resignation to Christ is in order to its being presented to God. Christianity is made up not of philosophy or politics, but pure divinity.

This is illustrated, ver. 45. He that sees me sees him that sent me; which is the same with *believing* in him, for faith is the eye of the soul; in getting acquaintance with Christ, we come to the knowledge of God. For, (1.) God makes himself known in the face of Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6. who is the express image of his person, Heb. i. 3. (2.) All that have a believing sight of Christ, are led by him to the knowledge of God, whom Christ has revealed to us by his word and Spirit. Christ, as God, was the image of his Father's person; but Christ, as *Mediator*, was his Father's *representative* in his relation to man; the divine light, law, and love, being communicated to us in and through him; so that in seeing him, we may read: in eyeing him as our Saviour, Prince, and Lord in the right of redemption, we see and eye the Father as our owner, ruler and benefactor, in the right of creation; for God is pleased to deal with fallen man by proxy.

2. We are hereby brought into a *comfortable enjoyment of ourselves*, ver. 46. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believes in me, Jew or Gentile, should not abide in darkness. Observe,

1. The character of Christ, I am come a light into the world, to be a light to it. It implies that he had a being, and a being as light before he came into the world, as the sun before it rises; the prophets and apostles were *made lights to the world*, but it was Christ only that came a light into this world, having before been a glorious light in the upper world, John iii. 19.

2. The comfort of Christians, they do not abide in darkness. (1.) They do not continue in that dark condition in which they were by nature, they are *light in the Lord*. They were without any true comfort or joy or hope, but do not continue in that condition; light is sown for them. (2.) What darkness of affliction, disquietment, or fear, they may afterwards be in, provision is made that they may not abide long in that darkness. (3.) They are delivered from that darkness which is perpetual, and which abideth for ever, that utter darkness, where is not the least gleam of light or hope of it.

Secondly, The *peril and danger* they are in that *believe not*, which gives fair warning to take heed of persisting in unbelief, ver. 47, 48. If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not, not I only, or not now, lest I should be looked upon as unfair in being judge in my own cause; yet let not infidelity think therefore to go unpunished, though I judge him not, there is one that judgeth him.

So that we have here the doom of unbelief. Observe,

1. Who they are whose unbelief is here condemned. Theirs who *hear Christ's words*, and yet *believe them not*, those shall not be condemned for their infidelity, that never had or could have the gospel; every man shall be judged according to the dispensation of light he was under; *they that have sinned without law, shall be judged without law*. But those that have heard, or might have heard, and would not, lie open to this doom.

2. What is the *constructive malignity* of their unbelief; not receiving Christ's word; it is interpreted, ver. 48. a *rejecting* of Christ, ὁ ἀπορρίπτει αὐτόν. It notes a rejection with scorn and contempt. Where the banner of the gospel is displayed, no neutrality is admitted; every man is either a subject or an enemy.

3. The wonderful patience and forbearance of our Lord Jesus, exercised toward those who slighted him when he was come here upon earth. I judge him not now. Note, Christ was not quick or hasty, to take advantage against those who refused the first offers of his grace, but continued waiting to be gracious. He did not strike those *dumb or dead* who contradicted him, never made intercession against Israel, as Elias did; though he had authority to judge, he suspended the execution of it, because he had work of another nature to do first, and that was to *save the world*. (1.) To save effectually those that were given him, before he came to judge the degenerate body of mankind. (2.) To offer salvation to all the world, and thus for to save them, that it is their own fault if they be not saved. He was to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Now the executing of the power of a judge was not congruous with that undertaking, Acts viii. 33. In his *humiliation his judgment was taken away*, it was suspended for a time.

4. The certain and unavoidable judgment of unbelievers at the great day, the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God; unbelief will certainly be a damning sin. Some think when Christ saith, I judge no man, he means they are *condemned already*; there needs no process, they are *self-judged*; no execution, they are *self-ruined*; judgment goes against them of course, Heb. ii. 3. Christ needs not appear against them as their accuser, they are miserable if he do not appear for them as their advocate; however he tells them plainly, when and where they will be reckoned with.

1. There is *one that judgeth them*. Nothing more dreadful than abused patience, and grace trampled on; though for a while *mercy rejoiceth against judgment*, yet there will be *judgment without mercy*.

2. Their final judgment is reserved to the last day; to that day of judgment Christ here binds over all unbelievers to answer then for all the contempts they have put upon him. Divine justice has *appointed a day*, and adjourns the sentence to that day, as Matt. xxvi. 64.

3. The word of Christ will judge them then. The words that I have spoken, how light soever you have made of them, the same shall judge the unbeliever in the last day; as the apostles, the preachers of Christ's word, are said to judge, Luke xxii. 30. Christ's words will judge unbelievers two ways. (1.) As the *evidence* of their crime, they will convict them. Every word Christ spoke, every sermon, every argument, every kind offer will be produced as a testimony against those who slighted all he said. (2.) As the *rule of their doom*, they will condemn them; they shall be judged according to the tenor of that covenant which Christ procured and published. That word of Christ, He that believes shall not be damned, will judge all unbelievers to eternal ruin; and there are many such like words.

Thirdly, A *solemn declaration* of the authority Christ had to demand our faith, and require us to receive his doctrine upon pain of damnation, ver. 49, 50. Where observe,

1. The commission which our Lord Jesus received from the Father, to deliver his doctrine to the world, ver. 49. I have not spoken of myself, as a mere man, much less as a common man; but the Father gave me a commandment what I should say. This is the same with what he had said, John vii. 17. My doctrine is, (1.) *Not mine*, for I have not spoken of myself. Christ, a Son of man, did not speak that which was of human contrivance or composition; as Son of God, he did not act separately, or by himself alone, but what he said was the result of the counsels of peace; as Mediator, his coming into the world was voluntary, and with his full consent, but not arbitrary, and of his own head. But, (2.) It was he that sent him. God the Father gave him, (1.) His commission; God sent him as his agent and plenipotentiary to concert matters between him and man, to set a treaty of peace on foot, and to settle the articles. (2.) His instructions, here called a *commandment*, for they were like those given an ambassador, directing him not only what he may say, but what he must say. The messenger of the covenant was intrusted with an errand which he must deliver. Note, Our Lord Jesus learned obedience himself, before he taught it us, though he were a Son. The Lord God commanded the first Adam, and he by his disobedience ruined us; he commanded the second Adam, and he by his obedience saved us.

God commanded him what he should say and what he should speak, two words signifying the same thing, to note that every word was divine. The Old Testament prophets sometimes spoke of themselves, but Christ spoke by the Spirit at all times. Some make this distinction; he was directed what he should say in his sermons, and what he should speak in his familiar discourses. Others this; he was directed what he should say in his preaching now, and what he should speak in his judging at the last day, for he had commission and instruction for both.

2. The scope, design and tendency of that commission, ver. 50. I know that his commandment is life everlasting. The commission given to Christ had a reference to the everlasting state of the children of men, and was in order to their everlasting life and happiness in that state, the instructions given to Christ as a prophet, were to reveal eternal life, 1 John v. 10. The power given to Christ as a king, was to give eternal life, John xvii. 2. Thus the command given him was life everlasting. This Christ saith, he knew: I know it is so, which intimates how cheerfully, and with what assurance Christ pursued his undertaking, knowing very well that he went upon a good errand; and that which would bring forth fruit unto life eternal. It intimates likewise how justly they will perish who reject Christ and his word: those who disobey Christ, despise everlasting life, and renounce it; so that not only Christ's words will judge them, but even their own; so shall their doom be, themselves have decided it; and who can except against it?

3. Christ's exact observance of the commission and instructions given him and his steady acting in pursuance of them. Whatsoever I speak, it is as the Father said unto me. Christ was intimately acquainted with the counsels of God, and was faithful in discovering so much of them to the children of men, as it was agreed should be discovered, and kept back nothing that was profitable. As the faithful witness delivereth souls, so did he, and spoke the truth. Now, (1.) This is a great encouragement to faith, the sayings of Christ rightly understood, are what we may yet have a pur souls upon. (2.)

It is a great example of obedience. Christ said as he was bidden, and so must we; communicated what the Father had said to him, and so must we. See *Acts* iv. 20. In the midst of all the respects paid him, this is the honour he values himself upon, that what the Father had said to him, that he spoke, and in the manner as he was directed, so he spoke. This was his glory, that as a Son he was faithful to him that appointed him; and by an unfeigned belief of every word of Christ, and an entire subjection of soul to it, we must give him the glory due to his name.

C H A P. XIII.

Our Saviour having finished his public discourses, in which he endured the contradiction of sinners; he now applies himself to a private conversation with his friends, in which he designed the consolation of saints. Henceforward we have an account of what passed between him and his disciples, who were to be intrusted with the affairs of his household, when he was gone into a far country; the necessary instructions and comforts he furnished them with; his hour being at hand, he applies himself to set his house in order. In this chapter, (1.) He washeth his disciples feet, ver. 1—17. (2.) He foretells who should betray him, ver. 18—30. (3.) He instructs them in the great doctrine of his own death, and the great duty of brotherly love, ver. 31—35. (4.) He foretells Peter's denying of him, ver. 36—38.

1. **N**OW before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. 2. And supper being ended, (the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;) 3. Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; 4. He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. 5. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. 6. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter said unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? 7. Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. 8. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. 9. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. 10. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. 12. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? 13. Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. 14. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. 15. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. 16. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. 17. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

It has generally been taken for granted, that Christ's washing his disciples feet, and the discourse that followed it, was the same night in which he was betrayed, and at the same sitting, wherein he eat the passover and instituted the Lord's Supper. But whether before the solemnity began, or after it was all over, or between the eating of the passover, and the institution of the Lord's Supper, they are not agreed. This evangelist making it his business to gather up those passages which the others had omitted, industriously omits those which the others had recorded; which occasions some difficulty in putting them together. And if it were then, we suppose that Judas went out, ver. 30. to get his men ready that were to apprehend the Lord Jesus in the garden. But Dr. Lightfoot is clearly of opinion, that this was done and said, even all that is recorded to the end of chap. xiv. not at the passover supper, for it is here said, ver. 1. to be before the feast of the passover; but at the supper in Bethany, two days before the passover, of which we read, *Matt.* xxvi. 2—6. at which Mary the second time anointed Christ's head with the remainder of her box of ointment. Or it might be at some other supper the night before the passover, not as that was in the house of Simon the leper, but in his own lodgings, where he had none but his disciples about him, and could be more free with them.

In these verses we have the story of Christ's washing his disciples feet: it was an action of a singular nature; no miracle, but a miracle of humility. Mary had now newly anointed his head, now lest his acceptance of that should look like taking state, he presently balanceth it with this act of abasement. But why would Christ do this? If the disciples feet needed washing, they could do it themselves; a wise man will not do a thing that looks odd and unusual, but for very good causes and considerations. We are sure it was not in a humour or a frolic that this was done; no, the transaction was very solemn, and carried on with a deal of seriousness; and four reasons are here intimated why Christ did this. (1.) That he might testify his love to his disciples, ver. 1, 2. (2.) That he might give an instance of his own voluntary humility and condescension, ver. 3, 4, 5. (3.) That he might signify to them spiritual washing, which is referred to in his discourse with Peter, ver. 6—11. (4.) That he might set them an example, ver. 12—17. And the opening of these four reasons for it, will take in the exposition of the whole story.

First, Christ washed his disciples feet, that he might give a proof of that great love wherewith he loved them; loved them to the end, ver. 1, 2.

(1.) It is here laid down as an undoubted truth, that our Lord Jesus having loved his own which were in the world, loved them to the end, ver. 1.

1. This is true of the disciples that were his immediate followers, in particular the twelve. These were his own in the world, his family, his school, his bosom friends. Children he had none to call his own, but he adopted them, and took them as his own. He had those that were his own in the other world, but he left them for a time to look after his own in this world. These he loved, he called them into fellowship with himself, conversed familiarly with them, was always tender of them, and of their comfort and reputation. He allowed them to be very free with him, and bore with their infirmities. He loved them to the end, continued his love to them as long as he lived, and after his resurrection; he never took away his loving kindness. Though there were some persons of quality that espoused his cause, he did not lay aside his old friends to make room for new ones, but still stuck to his poor fishermen. They were weak and defective in knowledge and grace, dull and forgetful, and yet though he reproved them often, he never ceased to love them and take care of them.

(2.) It is true of all believers, for these twelve patriarchs were the representatives of all the tribes of God's spiritual Israel. Note, 1. Our Lord Jesus hath a people in the world that are his own; his own, for they were given him by the Father, he has purchased them, and paid dear for them, and he hath set them apart for himself; his own, for they have devoted themselves to him as a peculiar people. His own. Where his own were spoken of that received him not, it is *ta idia*, his own things, as a man's cattle are his own, which yet he may, when he pleaseth, alter the property of. But here it is, *oi idioi*, his own persons, as a man's wife and children are his own, to whom he stands in a constant relation. 2. Christ has a dear love for his own that are in the world. He did love them with a love of good will when he gave himself for their redemption. He doth love them with a love of complacency, when he admits them into communion with himself. Though they are in this world, a world of darkness and distance, of sin and corruption, yet he loves them. He was now going to his own in heaven, the spirits of just men made perfect there, but he seems most concerned for his own on earth, because they most needed his care: the sickly child is most indulged. 3. Those whom Christ loves he loves to the end; he is constant in his love to his people; he rests in his love. He loves with an everlasting love, *Jer.* xxxi. 3. from everlasting in the counsels of it, to everlasting in the consequences of it. Nothing can separate a believer from the love of Christ; he loves his own, *etiam*, unto perfection, for he will perfect what concerns them, will bring them to that world where love is perfect.

2. Christ manifested his love to them by washing their feet as that good woman (*Luke* vii. 42.) shewed her love to Christ by washing his feet, and wiping them. Thus he would shew that as his love to them was constant, so it was condescending, and that imprecation of the designs of it he was willing to humble himself; and that the glories of his exalted state, which he was now entering upon, should be no obstruction at all to the favour he bare to his chosen: And thus he would confirm the promise he had made to all the saints, that he would make them sit down to meat, and would come forth and serve them, *Luke* xii. 37. would put honour upon them as great and surprising as for the Lord to serve his servants. The disciples had just now betrayed the weakness of their love to him, in grudging the ointment that was poured upon his head, *Matt.* xxvi. 28. yet he presently gives this proof of his love to them. Our infirmities are foils to Christ's kindnesses, and set them off.

3. He chose this time to do it, a little before his last passover, for two reasons.

1. Because now he knew that his hour was come, which he had long expected, when he should depart out of this world to the Father. Observe here, (1.) The change that was to pass over our Lord Jesus, he must depart. This began at his death, but was completed at his ascension. As Christ himself, so all believers, by virtue of their union with him, when they depart out of the world, are absent from the body, go to the Father, are present with the Lord. It is a departure out of the world, this unkind, injurious world, this faithless, treacherous world; this world of labour, toil and temptation; this vale of tears; and it is going to the Father, to the vision of the Father of spirits, and the fruition of him as ours.

(2.) The time of this change; his hour was come. It is sometimes called his enemies hour, *Luke* xxii. 53. the hour of their triumph; sometimes his hour, the hour of his triumph; the hour he had had in his eye all along. The time of his sufferings was fixed for an hour, and the continuance of them but for an hour.

(3.) His foresight of it; He knew that his hour was come; he knew from the beginning that it would come and when, but now he knew that it was come. We know not when our hour will come, and therefore what we have to do in habitual preparation for it ought never to be undone; but when we know by the harbingers that our hour is come, we must vigorously apply ourselves to an actual preparation as our Master did, *2 Peter* iii. 14.

Now it was in the immediate foresight of his departure that he washed his disciples feet; that as his own head was anointed just now against the day of his burial, so their feet might be washed against the day of their consecration by the descent of the Holy Ghost fifty days after, as the priests were washed, *Lev.* viii. 6. When we see our day approaching, we should do what good we can to those we leave behind.

2. Because the devil had now put it into the heart of Judas to betray him, ver. 2. These words in a parenthesis may be considered,

1. As tracing Judas's treason to its original; it was a sin of such a nature, that it evidently bore the devil's image and superscription. What ways of access the devil has to men's hearts, and by what method he darts in his suggestions, and mingles them undiscerned with those thoughts which are the natives of the heart, we cannot tell? But there are some sins in their own nature so exceeding sinful, and to which there is so little temptation from the world and the flesh, that it is plain Satan laid the egg of them in a heart disposed to be the nest to hatch them in. For Judas to betray such a master so cheaply, and upon no provocation, was such downright enmity to God, as could not be forged but by Satan himself, who thereby thought to ruin the Redeemer's kingdom, but it proved the ruin of his own.

2. As intimating a reason why Christ now washed his disciples feet. 1. Judas being now resolved to betray him, the time of his departure could not be far off: if this matter be determined, it is easy to infer with St. Paul, *I am now ready to be offered*. Note, The more malicious we perceive our enemies to be against us, the more industrious we should be to prepare for the worst that may come. 2. Judas being now got into the snare, and the devil aiming at Peter, and the rest of them, (*Luke* xxii. 31.) Christ would fortify his own against him. If the wolf has seized one of the flock, it is time for the shepherd to look well to the rest. Antidotes must be stirring when the infection is begun. Dr. Lightfoot observes, that the disciples had learned of Judas to murmur at the anointing of Christ (compare *John* xii. 4. with *Matt.* xxvi. 8.) Now lest they that had learned that of him should learn worse, he fortifies them by a lesson of humility against his most dangerous assaults. 3. Judas who was now plotting to betray him, was one of the twelve. Now Christ would hereby shew that he did not design to cast them

them all off for the faults of one. Though one of their college had a devil, and was a traitor, yet they should fare never the worse for that. Christ loves his church, though there are hypocrites in it, and had still a kindness for his disciples, though there was a Judas among them, and he knew it.

Secondly, Christ washed his disciples feet that he might give an instance of his own wonderful humility, and shew how lowly and condescending he was, and let all the world know how low he could stoop in love to his own. This is intimated, *ver. 3, 4, 5. Jesus knowing, and now exactly considering, and perhaps discoursing of his honours as Mediator, and telling his friends that the Father had given all things into his hand, &c. he riseth from supper, and to the great surprise of the company, who wondered what he was going to do, washed his disciples feet.*

1. Here is the *rightful advancement* of our Lord Jesus. Glorious things are here said of Christ as Mediator.

(1.) *The Father had given all things into his hands*; had given him a propriety in all, and a power over all as possessor of heaven and earth, in pursuance of the great designs of his undertaking; see *Matt. xi. 27.* The accommodation and arbitration of all matters in variance between God and man, was committed into his hands as the great umpire and referee; and the administration of the kingdom of God among men, in all the branches of it, was committed to him; so that all acts, both of government and judgment were to pass through his hands; he is *heir of all things.*

(2.) *He came from God*; this implies that he was in the beginning with God, and had a being and glory, not only before he was born into this world, but before the world itself was born; and that when he came into the world he came as God's ambassador, with a commission from him. He came from God as the *Son of God*, and the *sent of God*. The Old Testament prophets were raised up, and employed for God, but Christ came directly from him.

(3.) *He went to God*, to be glorified with him with the same glory which he had with God from eternity. That which comes from God shall go to God; they that are born from heaven, are bound for heaven. As Christ came from God to be agent for him on earth, so he went to God to be an agent for us in heaven; and it is a comfort to us to think how welcome he was there; he was brought near to the Ancient of days, *Dan. vii. 13.* And it was said to him, *sit thou at my right hand*, *Psal. cx. 1.*

(4.) *He knew all this*; was not like the prince in the cradle, that knows nothing of the honour he is born to, or like Moses, who wist not that his face shone; no, he had a full view of all the honours of his exalted state, and yet stooped thus low. But how doth this come in here?

1. As an *inducement* to him now quickly to leave what lessons and legacies he had to leave to his disciples, because his hour was now come when he must take his leave of them, and be exalted above that familiar converse which he had now with them, *ver. 1.*

2. It may come in as that which supported him under his sufferings, and carried him cheerfully through this sharp encounter. Judas was now betraying him, and he knew it, and knew what would be the consequence of it; yet knowing also that he came from God, and went to God, he did not draw back, but went on cheerfully.

3. It seems to come in as a foil to his condescension, to make it the more admirable. The reasons of divine grace are sometimes represented in scripture as strange and surprising, as *Isa. lvii. 17, 18. Hosea ii. 13, 14.* so here that is given as an inducement to Christ to stoop, which should rather have been as a reason for his taking state; for God's thoughts are not as ours. Compare with this, those passages which preface the most signal instances of condescending grace; with the displays of divine glory, as *Psal. lxxviii. 4, 5. Isa. lvii. 15.—lxvii. 1, 2.*

1. Here is the *voluntary abasement* of our Lord Jesus notwithstanding this. *Jesus knowing his own glory as God, and his own authority and power as Mediator, one would think it should follow, He riseth from supper, lays aside his ordinary garments, calls for robes, bids them keep their distance, and do him homage; no, quite contrary, when he considered this, he gave the greatest instance of humility.* Note, (1.) A well grounded assurance of heaven and happiness, instead of puffing a man with pride, will make and keep him very humble. (2.) Those that would be found conformable to Christ, and partakers of his Spirit, must study to keep their minds low in the midst of greatest advancements. Now that which Christ humbled himself to, was to wash his disciples feet.

1. The action itself was mean and servile, and that which servants, of the lowest rank were employed in. *Let thine handmaid (saith Abigail) be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord; let me be in the meanest employment, 1 Sam. xxv. 41.* If he had washed their hands or faces it had been great condescension: Elisha poured water on the hands of Elijah, *2 Kings iii. 11.* but for Christ to stoop to such a piece of drudgery as this, we may well be amazed at it. Thus he would teach us to think nothing below us, wherein we may be serviceable to God's glory, and the good of our brethren.

2. The condescension was so much the greater, that he did this for his own disciples, who in themselves were of a low and despicable condition, not curious about their bodies; their feet it is likely, seldom washed, and therefore very dirty. In relation to him they were his scholars, his servants, and such as should have washed his feet, whose dependence was upon him, and their expectations from him. Many of great spirits otherwise will do a mean thing to curry favour with their superiors, they rise by stooping, and climb by clinging; but for Christ to do this to his disciples, could be no act of policy or complaisance, but pure humility.

3. He rose from supper to do it. Though we translate it, *ver. 2. supper being ended*; it might be better read, there being a supper made, or he being at supper, for he sat down again, *ver. 12.* and we find him dipping a sop, *ver. 26.* so that he did it in the midst of his meal, and thereby taught us, (1.) Not to reckon it a disturbance, or any just cause of uneasiness to be called from our meal to do God or our brother any real service, esteeming the discharge of our duty more than our necessary food, *John iv. 34.* Christ would not leave his preaching to oblige his nearest relations, *Mark iii. 33.* but would leave his supper to shew his love to his disciples. (2.) Not to be over nice about our meat. It would have turned many a squeamish stomach to wash dirty feet at supper-time; but Christ did it, not that we might learn to be rude and slovenly, cleanliness and godliness will do well together; but to teach us, not to be curious, not to indulge, but mortify the delicacy of the appetite, giving good manners their due place and no more.

4. He put himself into the garb of a servant to do it; he laid aside his loose and upper garments, that he might apply himself to this service the more expeditiously. We must address ourselves to duty as those that are resolved not to take state, but to take pains; we must divest ourselves of every thing that would either feed our pride, or hang in our way, and hinder us in what we have to do; must gird up the loins of our mind, as those that in earnest buckle to business.

5. He did it with all the humble ceremony that could be, went through all the parts of the service distinctly, and baulked none of them; he did it as if he had been used thus to serve; did it himself alone, and had none to minister to him in it. He girded himself with the towel, as servants throw a

napkin on their arm, or put an apron before them; he poured water into the bason out of the water-pots that stood by, *John ii. 6.* and then washed their feet; and to complete the service, wiped them. Some think he did not wash the feet of them all, but only four or five of them, that being thought sufficient to answer the end; but I see nothing to countenance this conjecture, for in other places where he did make a difference it is taken notice of; and his washing the feet of them all without exception, teacheth us a catholic and extensive charity to all Christ's disciples, even the least.

6. Nothing appears to the contrary, but that he washed the feet of Judas among the rest, for he was present, *ver. 26.* It is the character of a widow indeed, that she had washed the saints feet, *1 Tim. v. 10.* and there is some comfort in that, but the blessed Jesus here washed the feet of a sinner, the worst of sinners; the worst to him that was at this time contriving to betray him.

Many interpreters make Christ's washing his disciples feet a representation of his whole undertaking. He knew that he was equal with God, and all things were his, and yet he rose from his table in glory, laid aside his robes of light, girded himself with our nature, took upon him the form of a servant, came not to be ministered to, but to minister; poured out his blood, poured out his soul unto death, and thereby prepared a laver to wash us from our sins, *Rev. i. 5.*

Thirdly, Christ washed his disciples feet that he might signify to them spiritual washing, and the cleansing of the soul from the pollutions of sin. This is plainly intimated in his discourse with Peter upon it, *ver. 6—11.* In which we may observe,

1. The surprise Peter was in when he saw his Master go about this mean service, *ver. 6. Then comes he to Simon Peter, with his towel and bason, and bid him put out his feet to be washed.* Chrysostom conjectures that he washed the feet of Judas first, who ready admitted it, and was pleased to see his Master so disparage himself. It is most probable when he went about this service, (which is all that is meant by his beginning to wash, *ver. 5.*) he took Peter first; and the rest would not have suffered it, if they had not first heard it explained in what passed between Christ and Peter.

Whether Christ came first to Peter or no, when he did come to him, Peter startled at the proposal, *Lord (saith he) dost thou wash my feet?* Here is an emphasis to be laid upon the persons *thou* and *me*; and the placing of the words is observable, *ὅτι μὲν, what, thou mine? Tu mihi lavas pedes? Quid est tui? Quid est mihi? Cogitanda sunt potius quam dicenda.* Aug. in loc. What thou? our Lord and Master, whom we know and believe to be the Son of God, and Saviour and ruler of the world, do this for me, a worthless worm of the earth, a sinful man, O Lord. Shall those hands wash my feet, which with a touch have cleansed lepers, given sight to the blind, and raised the dead? So Theophylact, and from Dr. Taylor. Very willingly would Peter have taken the bason and towel, and washed his Master's feet, and been proud of the honour, *Luke xvii. 7, 8.* This had been natural and regular, for my master to wash my feet, is such a solecism as never was; such a paradox as I cannot understand; *Is this the manner of men?* Note, Christ's condescensions, especially his condescensions to us, wherein we find ourselves taken notice of by his grace, are justly the matter of our admiration, *John xiv. 27. Who am I, Lord God? And what is my father's house?*

2. The immediate satisfaction Christ gave to this question of surprise, which was at the least sufficient to silence his objections, *ver. 7. What I do thou knowest not now, but shalt know hereafter.* Here are two reasons why Peter must submit to what Christ was doing.

(1.) Because he was at present in the dark concerning it, and ought not to oppose what he did not understand, but acquiesce in the will and wisdom of one who could give a good reason for all he said and did. Christ would teach Peter an implicit obedience; what I do, thou knowest not now, and therefore art no competent judge of it, but must believe it is well done, because I do it. Note, Consciousness to ourselves of the darkness we labour under, and our inability to judge of what God doth, should make us sparing and modest in our censures of his proceeding; see *Heb. xi. 8.*

(2.) Because there was something considerable in it, which he should hereafter know the meaning of. *Thou shalt know hereafter* what need thou hast of being washed, when thou shalt be guilty of the heinous sin of denying me. So some. Thou shalt know, when in the discharge of the office of an apostle, thou wilt be employed in washing off from those under thy charge, the sins and defilements of their earthly afflictions: So Dr. Hammond. Note, 1. Our Lord Jesus doth many things which even his own disciples do not for the present know the meaning of, but they shall know afterwards; what he did, when he became man for us, and what he did when he became a worm, and no man for us; what he did when he lived our life, and what he did when he laid it down, could not be understood till afterward, and then it appeared that it beloved him, *Heb. ii. 17.* Subsequent providences explain preceding ones; and we see afterwards what was the kind tendency of events that seemed most cross: And the way which we thought was about, proved the right way. 2. Christ's washing his disciples feet had a significance in it, which they themselves did not understand till afterwards; when Christ explained it to be a specimen of the laver of regeneration, and till the Spirit was poured out upon them from on high. We must let Christ take his own way, both in ordinances and providences, and we shall find in the issue it was the best way.

3. Peter's peremptory refusal, notwithstanding this, to let Christ wash his feet, *ver. 8. Thou shalt by no means wash my feet; no, never.* So it is in the original. It is the language of a fixed resolution.

Now, 1. Here was a shew of humility and modesty; Peter herein seemed to have, and no doubt he really had, a great respect for his Master, as he had, *Luke v. 8.* Thus many are beguiled of their reward in a voluntary humility, *Col. ii. 18—23.* Such a self-denial as Christ neither appoints, nor accepts; for, 2. Under this shew of humility, there was a real contradiction to the will of the Lord Jesus. *I will wash thy feet*, saith Christ; but thou never shalt, saith Peter, it is not a fitting thing, so making himself wiser than Christ. It is not humility, but infidelity, to put away the offers of the gospel, as if too rich to be made us, or too good news to be true.

4. Christ's insisting upon his offer, and a good reason given to Peter, why he should accept it; *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.* Which may be taken,

(1.) As a severe caution against disobedience. If I wash thee not, i. e. if thou continue refractory, and will not comply with thy Master's will in so small a matter, thou shalt not be owned as one of my disciples, but be justly discarded and cashiered for not observing orders. Thus several of the ancients understand it; if Peter will make himself wiser than his Master, and dispute the commands he ought to obey, he doth in effect renounce his allegiance, and say as they did, *What portion have we in David?* in the Son of David; and so shall his doom be, he shall have no part in him. Let him use no more manners than doth him good, for to obey is better than sacrifice, *1 Sam. xv. 22.* Or,

(2.) As a declaration of the necessity of spiritual washing; and so I think it is to be understood. If I wash not thy soul from the pollution of sin, thou hast no part with me, no interest in me, no communion with me, no be-

nefit by me. Note, All those, and those only, that are spiritually washed by Christ, have a part in Christ. (1.) To have a part in Christ, or with Christ, has all the happiness of a Christian bound up in it, to be partakers of Christ, Heb. iii. 14. to share in those inestimable privileges which result from an union with him, and relation to him. It is that *good part*, the having of which is the *one thing needful*. 2. It is necessary to our having a part in Christ, that he wash us. All those whom Christ owns and saves, he justifies and sanctifies, and both are included in his washing them. We cannot partake of his glory, if we partake not of his merit and righteousness, and of his Spirit and grace.

5. Peter's more than submission, his earnest request to be washed by Christ, ver. 9. If this be the meaning of it, *Lord wash not my feet only, but also my hands and my head*. How soon is Peter's mind changed; when the mistake of his understanding was rectified, the corrupt resolution of his will was soon altered. Let us therefore not be peremptory in any resolve (but only in our resolve to follow Christ) because we may soon see cause to retract it; but cautious in taking up a purpose we will be tenacious of. Observe,

(1.) How ready Peter is to recede from what he had said, Lord, what a fool was I to speak such a hasty word! Now the washing of him appeared to be an act of Christ's authority and grace, he admits it; but disliked it, when it seemed only an act of humiliation. Note, (1.) Good men, when they see their error, will not be loth to recant it. (2.) Sooner or later Christ will bring all to be of his mind.

(2.) How importunate he is for the purifying grace of the Lord Jesus, and the universal influence of it, even upon his hands and head. Note, A divorce from Christ, and an exclusion from having a part in him, is the most formidable evil in the eyes of all that are enlightened, for the fear of which they will be persuaded to any thing. And for fear of this, we should be earnest with God in prayer, that he will wash us; will justify and sanctify us. Lord, that I may not be cut off from thee, make me fit for thee, by the washing of regeneration, *Lord, wash, not my feet only*, from the gross pollutions that cleave to them, but also *my hands and my head*, from the lesser spots which they have contracted, and the undiscerned filth which proceeds from perspiration from the body itself. Note, Those who truly desire to be sanctified, desire to be sanctified throughout, and to have the whole man, with all its parts and powers purified, 1 Thess. v. 23.

6. Christ's further explication of this sign, as it is represented spiritual washing.

1. With reference to his disciples that were faithful to him, ver. 10. *He that is washed* all over in the bath (as was frequently practised in those countries) when he returns to his house, needeth not save to wash his feet, his hands and head having been washed, and he having only dirtied his feet in walking home. Peter had gone from one extreme to the other; at first he would not let Christ wash his feet; and now he overlooks what Christ had done for him in his baptism, and what was signified thereby, and cries out to have his hands and head washed; now Christ directs him into the meaning; he must have his feet washed, but not his hands and head.

(1.) See here what is the comfort and privilege of such as are in a justified state, they are washed by Christ, and are clean every whit, i. e. they are graciously accepted of God, as if they were so; and though they offend, yet they need not upon their repentance, to be again put into a justified state, for then should they often be baptized. The evidence of a justified state may be clouded, and the comforts of it suspended, when yet the charter of it is not vacated or taken away. Though we have occasion to repent daily, God's gifts and callings are without repentance. The heart may be swept and garnished, and yet still remain the devil's palace, but if it be washed, it belongs to Christ, and he will not lose it.

(2.) See what ought to be the daily care of those, who through grace are in a justified state, and that is to wash their feet. To cleanse themselves from the guilt they contract daily through infirmity and inadvertency, by the renewed exercise of repentance with a believing application of the virtue of Christ's blood. We must also wash our feet by constant watchfulness against every thing that is defiling, for we must cleanse our way, and cleanse our feet by taking heed thereto, Psalm cxix. 9. The priests, when they were consecrated, were washed with water; and though they did not need afterwards to be so washed all over, yet, whenever they went in to minister, they must wash their feet and hands at the laver, on pain of death, Exod. xxx. 19, 20. The provision made for our cleansing should not make us presumptuous, but the more cautious; *I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?* From yesterday's pardon we should fetch an argument against this day's temptation.

2. With reflection upon Judas; and ye are clean, but not all, ver. 10, 11. He pronounceth his disciples clean, clean through the word he had spoken to them, John xv. 3. He washed them himself, and then said, *Ye are clean*, but he excepts Judas; not all; they were all baptized, even Judas, yet not all clean; many have the sign, that have not the thing signified. Note, (1.) Even among those who are called disciples of Christ, and profess relation to him, there are some who are not clean, Prov. xxx. 12. (2.) The Lord knows them that are his, and them that are not, 2 Tim. ii. 19. The eye of Christ can separate between the precious and the vile, the clean and the unclean. (3.) When those that have called themselves disciples, afterwards prove traitors, their apostacy at last, is a certain evidence of their hypocrisy all along. (4.) Christ sees it necessary to let his disciples know that they are not all clean; that we may all be jealous of ourselves, *Is it I? Lord, is it I*, that am among the clean, yet not clean; and that when hypocrites are discovered, it may be no surprise or stumbling to us.

Fourthly, Christ washed his disciples feet; to set before us an example: This explication he gave of what he had done, when he had done it, ver. 12—17.

1. Observe with what solemnity he gave an account of the meaning of what he had done, ver. 12. *After he had washed their feet*, he said, *Know ye what I have done?*

(1.) He adjourned the explication till he had finished the transaction, (1.) To try their submission and implicit obedience. What he did, they should not know till after, that they might learn to acquiesce in his will when they could not give a reason for it. (2.) Because it was proper to finish the riddle before he unriddled it. Thus as to his whole undertaking, when his sufferings were finished, he had resumed the garments of his exalted state, and was ready to sit down again, then he opened the understandings of his disciples, and poured out his Spirit, Luke xxiv. 46.

(2.) Before he explained it, he asked them if they could construe it; *Know ye what I have done to you?* He put this question to them, not only to make them sensible of their ignorance, and the need they had to be instructed, (as Zech. iv. 5—13. *Knowest thou not what these be? and I said, No, my Lord*) but to raise their desires and expectations of instruction. *I would have you know*, and if you will give attention, I will tell you. Note, It is the will of Christ that sacramental signs should be explained, and that his people should be acquainted with the meaning of them; otherwise though never so significant, to them who know not the thing signified, they are in-

significant. Hence they are directed to ask, *What mean ye by this service* Exod. xii. 26.

2. Observe what he grounds that which he had to say upon, ver. 13. *You call me Master and Lord*, you give me those titles in speaking of me, in speaking to me, and you say well, for so I am; you are in the relation of scholars to me, and I do the part of a master to you. Note, 1. Jesus Christ is our Master and Lord; he that is our Redeemer and Saviour is, in order to that, our Lord and Master. He is our Master διδάσκαλος, our teacher and instructor, in all necessary truths and rules, as a prophet revealing to us the will of God. He is our Lord, κύριος, or ruler and owner, that has authority over us, and propriety in us. 2. It becomes the disciples of Christ to call him Master and Lord, not in compliment, but in reality; not by constraint, but with delight. Devout Mr. Herbert, when he mentioned the name of Christ, used to add, *my Master*; and thus expresseth himself concerning it in one of his poems; *How sweetly doth my Master sound, my Master! As amber-grease leaves a rich scent unto the taster, so doth these words a sweet content; an oriental fragrancy, my Master*. 3. Our calling Christ Master and Lord, is an obligation upon us to receive and observe the instructions he gives us: Christ would thus pre-engage their obedience to a command that was displeasing to flesh and blood. If Christ be our Master and Lord, be so by our own consent, and we have often called him so, we are bound in honour and honesty to be observant of him.

3. Observe the lesson which Christ hereby taught, *ye also ought to wash one another's feet*, ver. 14.

1. Some have understood this literally, and have thought these words amount to the institution of a standing ordinance in the church, that Christians should, in a solemn religious manner, wash one another's feet in token of their condescending love to one another. St. Ambrose took it so, and practised it in the church of Milan. St. Austin saith, that those Christians who did not do it with their hands, yet (he hoped) did it with their hearts in humility; but he saith it is much better to do it with the hands also, when there is occasion, as 1 Tim. v. 10. what Christ has done, Christians should not disdain to do. Calvin saith, that the pope, in the annual observing of this ceremony on Thursday in the passion week, is rather Christ's ape than his follower, for the duty enjoined in conformity to Christ, was mutual; wash one another's feet. And Jansenius saith, it is done *Frigide & dissimiliter*.

2. But doubtless it is to be understood figuratively; it is an instructive sign, but not sacramental, as the Eucharist. This was a parable to the eye; and three things our Master hereby designed to teach us.

(1.) A humble condescension; we must learn of our Master to be lowly in heart, Matt. xi. 29. and walk with all lowliness; we must thinkly meanly of ourselves, and respectfully of our brethren, and nothing below us but sin; we must say of that which seems mean, but has a tendency to the glory of God, and our brethren's good, as David, 2 Sam. vi. 22. *If this be to be vile, I will be yet more vile*. Christ had often taught his disciples humility, and they had forgot the lesson; but now he teacheth them in such a way as sure they could never forget.

(2.) A condescension to be serviceable. To wash one another's feet, is to stoop to the meanest offices of love, for the real good and benefit of one of another, as blessed Paul, who though free from all, made himself servant of all; and blessed Jesus, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. We must not grudge to take care and pains, and to spend time, and to diminish ourselves for the good of others that we are not under any particular obligations to, even to our inferiors, and such as are not in a capacity of making us any requital. Washing the feet after travel, contributed both to the decency of the person, and to his ease, so that to wash one another's feet, is to consult both the credit and the comfort of one another; to do what we can, both to advance our brethren's reputation and to make their minds easy, See 1 Cor. x. 24. Heb. vi. 10. The duty is mutual, we must both accept help from our brethren, and afford help to our brethren.

(3.) A serviceableness to the sanctification of one of another. Ye ought to wash one another's feet, from the pollutions of sin. Austin takes it in this sense, and many others. We cannot satisfy for one another's sins, that is peculiar to Christ, but we may help to purify one another from sin. We must in the first place wash ourselves, this charity must begin at home, Matt. vi. 5. but it must not end there, we must sorrow for the failings and follies of our brethren, much more their gross pollutions, 1 Cor. v. 2. must wash our brethren's polluted feet in tears. We must faithfully reprove them, and do what we can to bring them to repentance, Gal. vi. 1. and we must admonish them to prevent their falling into the mire; this is washing their feet.

(4.) Here is the ratifying and enforcing of this command from the example of what Christ had now done. *If I your Lord and Master have done it to you*, you ought to do it to one another. He shews the cogency of this argument in two things.

1. I am your Master, and you are my disciples, and therefore you ought to learn of me, ver. 15. for in this, as in other things, I have given you an example, that you should do to others, as I have done to you. Observe,

(1.) What a good teacher Christ is: He teacheth by example as well as doctrine, and for that end came into this world, and dwelt among us, that he might set us a copy of all those graces and duties which his holy religion teacheth; and it is a copy without one false stroke. Hereby he made his own laws more intelligible and practicable, and our obedience to them more easy, pleasant, and honourable. Christ is a commander, like Gideon, who said to his soldiers, *Look on me, and do likewise*, Judg. vii. 17. like Abimelech, who said, *What ye have seen me do, make haste and do as I have done*, Judg. ix. 48. And like Caesar, who called his soldiers, not *milities*, but *commilitones*, fellow-soldiers, and whose usual word was, *Ite illuc*, but *venite huc*; not go, but come.

(2.) What good scholars we must be; we must do as he hath done; for therefore he gave us a copy that we should write after it, that we might be as he was in this world, 1 John iv. 17. and walk as he walked, 1 John ii. 6. Christ's example herein is to be followed by ministers in particular, in whom the graces of humility and holy love should especially appear, and by the exercise thereof they effectually serve the interests of their Master, and the ends of their ministry. When Christ sent his apostles abroad as his agents, it was with this charge, that they should not take state upon them, nor carry things with a high hand, but become all things to all men, 2 Cor. iv. 5. What I have done to your dirty feet, that do ye to the polluted souls of sinners; wash them. Some who suppose this to be done at the passover supper, think it intimates a rule in admitting communicants to the Lord's supper, to see that they be first washed and cleansed by reformation and a blameless conversation, and then take them in to compass God's altar. But all Christians likewise are here taught to condescend to each other in love, and to do it as Christ did it, unasked, unpaid; we must not be mercenary in the services of love, nor do them with reluctance.

2. I am your Master, and you are my disciples, and therefore you cannot think it below you to do that, how mean soever it may seem, which you have seen me do, for, ver. 16. *The servant is not greater than his lord, neither he that is sent*, though sent with all the pomp and power of an ambassador, yet is he

he not greater than him that sent him. Christ hath urged this, *Matt. x. 24, 25*, as a reason why they should not think it strange if they suffered as he did; here he urgeth it as a reason why they should not think much to humble themselves as he did. What he did not think a disparagement to him, they must not think a disparagement to them. Perhaps the disciples inwardly discussed this precept of washing one another's feet, as inconsistent with that dignity they expected shortly to be preferred to; to obviate such thoughts Christ minds them of their place as *his servants*; they were not better men than their Master, and what was consistent with his dignity, was much more consistent with theirs. If he were humble and condescending, it ill became them to be proud and assuming. Note, 1. We must take good heed to ourselves, lest Christ's gracious condescensions to us, and advancements of us through the corruption of nature, occasion us to think any high thoughts of ourselves, or low thoughts of him. We need to be put in mind of this that we are not greater than our Lord. 2. Whatever our Master was pleased to condescend to in favour to us, we should much more condescend to in conformity to him. Christ, by humbling himself, has dignified humility, and put an honour upon it, and obliged his followers to think nothing below them but sin. We commonly say to those who disdain to do such or such a thing, *as good as you have done it*, and been never the worse thought of; and true indeed it is, if our Master has done it. When we see our Master serving, we cannot but see how ill it becomes us to be domineering.

Lastly, Our Saviour closes this part of his discourse with an intimation of the necessity of their obedience to these instructions, *If ye know these things; or seeing ye know them, happy are ye, if ye do them*. Most people think, happy are they that *rise and rule*. Washing one another's feet will never get estates and preferments; but Christ saith, for all that, happy are they that *stoop, and obey*. If ye know these things. That may be understood either as speaking doubtfully, whether they know them or no; so strong was their conceit of a temporal kingdom, that it was a question whether they could entertain the notion of a duty so contrary to that conceit; or, as taking it for granted, that they did know these things; since they had such excellent precepts given them, recommended by such an excellent pattern, it will be necessary to the completing of their happiness, that they practice accordingly.

1. This is applicable to the commands of Christ in general. Note, Though it is a great advantage to know our duty, yet we shall come short of happiness if we do not our duty. Knowing is in order to doing; that knowledge therefore is vain and fruitless, which is not reduced to practice; nay, it will aggravate the sin and ruin, *Luke xii. 47, 48. James iv. 17*. It is knowing and doing that will demonstrate us of Christ's kingdom, and wise builders. See *Psal. ciii. 17, 18*.

2. It is to be applied especially to this command of humility and serviceableness. Nothing is better known, or more readily acknowledged than this, that we should be humble; and therefore, though many will own themselves to be *passionate and intemperate*, few will own themselves to be *proud*, for it is as *inexcusable* a sin, and as *hateful* as any other; and yet how little is to be seen of true humility, and that mutual subjection and condescension which the law of Christ insists so much upon? Most know these things so well as to expect that others should do accordingly to them, yield to them, and serve them, but not so well as to do so themselves.

18. ¶ I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. 19. Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he. 20. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. 21. When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. 22. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. 23. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples whom Jesus loved. 24. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. 25. He then lying on Jesus' breast, saith unto him, Lord, who is it? 26. Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. 27. And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. 28. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. 29. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or that he should give something to the poor. 30. He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.

We have here the discovery of Judas's plot to betray his Master; Christ knew it from the beginning: but now first he discovered it to his disciples, who did not expect Christ should be betrayed, though he had often told them so, much less did they suspect that one of them should do it. Now here,

First, Christ gives them a general intimation of it, *ver. 8. I speak not of you all, I cannot expect you will all do these things, for I know whom I have chosen and whom I have passed by*; but the scripture will be fulfilled, *Psal. xli. 2. He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me*. He doth not yet speak out, of the crime, or the criminal, but raiseth their expectations of a further discovery.

1. He intimates to them, that they were not all right. He had said, *ver. 10. Ye are clean, but not all*. So here, *I speak not of you all*. Note, What is said of the excellencies of Christ's disciples, cannot be said of all that are called so: The word of Christ is a distinguished word, which separates between *cattle and cattle*, and will distinguish thousands into hell; who flattered themselves with hopes that they were going to heaven. *I speak not of you all*; you my disciples and followers. Note, There is a mixture of bad with good in the best societies: a Judas among the apostles; it will be so till we come to the blessed society, into which shall enter nothing unclean or disguised.

2. That he himself knew who were right, and who were not. *I know*

whom I have chosen, who the few are that are chosen among the many that are called with the common call. Note, 1. They that are chosen, Christ himself had the choosing of them; he nominated the persons he undertook for. 2. They that are chosen, are known to Christ, for he never forgets any, whom he has once had in his thoughts of love, *2 Tim. ii. 19*.

That in the treachery of him that proved false to him, the scripture was fulfilled, which takes off very much both the surprise and offence of the thing. Christ took one into his family, whom he foresaw to be a traitor, and did not by effectual grace prevent his being so, that the scripture might be fulfilled. Let it not therefore be a stumbling-block to any; for though it do not at all lessen Judas's offence, it may lessen our offence at it. The scripture referred to, is David's complaint of the treachery of some of his enemies; the Jewish expositors generally understand it of Ahithophel, and our's from them; and Grotius thinks it intimates, that the death of Judas would be like that of Ahithophel. But because the psalm speaks of David's sickness, which we read nothing of at the time of Ahithophel's deserting him, it may better be understood of some other friend of his that proved false to him. This our Saviour applies to Judas.

1. Judas as an apostle, was admitted to the highest privileges, he did eat bread with Christ. He was familiar with him, and favoured by him, was one of his family, one of those with whom he was intimately conversant. David saith of his treacherous friend, he did eat of my bread, but Christ, being poor, had no bread he could properly call his own, he saith he did eat bread with me, such as he had by the kindness of his friends, that ministered to him, his disciples had their share of Judas among the rest. Wherever he went, Judas was welcome with him, did not dine among servants, but sat at table with his Master, eat of the same dish, drank of the same cup, and in all respects fared as he fared. He eat miraculous bread with him, when the loaves were multiplied, eat the passover with him. Note, All that eat bread with Christ, are not his disciples indeed. See *1 Cor. x. 5*.

2. Judas as an apostate was guilty of the basest treachery; he lifted up the heel against Christ. (1.) He forsook him, turned his back upon him, went out from the society of his disciples, *ver. 30*. (2.) He despised him, shook off the dust of his feet against him, in contempt of him and his gospel. Nay, (3.) He became an enemy to him; spurned at him as wrestlers do at their adversaries, whom they would overthrow. Note, It is no new thing for those that were Christ's seeming friends, to prove his real enemies: They who pretended to magnify him, magnify themselves against him. They eat not only the bread of his charity, but the bread of his covenant, yet rebel against him, and thereby prove themselves guilty not only of the basest ingratitude, but the basest treachery and perfidiousness.

Secondly, He gives them a reason why he told them beforehand of the treachery of Judas, *ver. 19. Now I tell you before it come*, before Judas has begun to put his wicked plot in execution, that when it is come to pass, you may, instead of stumbling at it, be confirmed in your belief, that I am he; he that should come.

1. By his clear and certain foresight of things to come, which in this, as in other instances, he gave incontestible proof of, he proved himself to be the true God, before whom all things are naked and open. Christ foretold that Judas would betray him, when there was no ground to suspect such a thing, and so proved himself the eternal Word, which is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The prophecies of the New Testament concerning the apostacy of the latter times, which we have, *2 Thess. ii. 1 Tim. iv. and in the Apocalypse*, being evidently accomplished, it is a proof that those writings were divinely inspired, and confirms our faith in the whole canon of scripture.

2. By this application of the types and prophecies of the Old Testament to himself, he proved himself to be the true Messiah, to whom all the prophets bare witness, *Thus it was written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and he suffered just as it was written, Luke xxiv. 25, 26. John viii. 28*.

Thirdly, He gives a word of encouragement to his apostles, and all his ministers; whom he employed in his service, *ver. 20. He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me*. The purport of these words is the same with what we have in other scriptures, but it is not easy to make out their coherence here. (1.) Christ had told his disciples they must humble and abase themselves. Now, saith he, though there may be those that will despise you for your condescension, yet there will be those that will do you honour, and shall be honoured for so doing. They who know themselves dignified by Christ's commission, may be content to be vilified in the world's opinion. (2.) It is intended to silence the scruples of those, who, because there was a traitor among the apostles, would be shy of receiving any of them, for if one of them was false to his Master, whom would any of them be true to, *Ex uno disce omnes*; they are all alike, No, as Christ will think never the worse of them for Judas's crime, so he will stand by them and own them, and will raise up such as shall receive them. They that had received Judas when he was a preacher, and perhaps were converted and edified by his preaching, were never the worse, nor should reflect upon it with any regret, though he afterwards proved a traitor; for he was one whom Christ sent. We cannot know what men are, much less what they will be, but those who appear to be sent of Christ, we must receive, till the contrary appear. Though some by entertaining strangers have entertained robbers unawares, yet we must still be hospitable, for thereby some have entertained angels. The abuses put upon our charity, though ordered with never so much discretion, will never justify our uncharitableness, nor lose us the reward of our charity.

1. We are here encouraged to receive ministers as sent of Christ. He that receiveth whomsoever I send, though weak and poor, and subject to like passions as others, for as the law, so the gospel, makes men priests that have an infirmity, yet if he deliver my message, and regularly called and appointed to do so, and as an officer give himself to the word and prayer; he that entertains him shall be owned as a friend of mine; Christ was now leaving the world, but he would leave an order of men to be his agents to deliver his word, and those who receive that in the light and love of it, receive him; to believe the doctrine of Christ, and obey his law, and accept the salvation offered upon the terms proposed; this is receiving those whom Christ sends, and it is receiving Christ Jesus the Lord himself.

2. We are here encouraged to receive Christ as sent of God: He that thus receiveth me, that receiveth Christ in his ministers, receiveth the Father also, for they come upon his errand likewise, baptizing in the name of the Father, as well as of the Son. Or, in general, he that receiveth me as his Prince and Saviour, receiveth him that sent me, as his portion and felicity. Christ was sent of God, and in embracing his religion, we embrace the only true religion.

Fourthly, Christ more particularly notices to them the plot which one of their number was now hatching against him, *ver. 21. When Jesus had thus said in general, to prepare them for a more particular discovery, he was troubled in spirit, and shewed it by some gesture or sign, and he testified, he solemnly declared it (cum animo testandi) one of you shall betray me*; one of you mine apostles and constant followers. None indeed could be said to betray him but those whom he reposed a confidence in, and were the witnesses of his retirements. This did not determine Judas to sin by any

Fatal necessity, for though the event did follow according to the prediction, yet not from the prediction. Christ is not the author of sin: yet as to this heinous sin of Judas,

1. Christ *foresaw* it; for even that which is secret and future, and hid from the eyes of all living, is naked and open before the eyes of Christ. He knows what is in men better than they do themselves, *2 Kings* viii. 12. and therefore sees what will be done by them. *I knew that thou wouldst deal very treacherously*, *Isa.* xlviii. 8.

2. He *foretold* it, not only for the sake of the rest of the disciples, but for the sake of Judas himself, that he might take warning, and recover himself out of the snare of the devil. Traitors proceed not in their plots, when they find they are discovered: surely Judas when he finds that his Master knows his design, will retreat in time; if not, it will aggravate his condemnation.

3. He spoke of it with a *manifest concern*; he was *troubled in spirit* when he mentioned it. He had often spoken of his own sufferings and death, without any such trouble of spirit as he here discovered when he spoke of the ingratitude and treachery of Judas. This touched him in a tender part. Note, The falls and miscarriages of the disciples of Christ, are a great trouble of spirit to their Master; the sins of Christians are the grief of Christ. What? *One of you betray me?* You that have received from me such distinguishing favours, you that I had reason to think would be firm to me, that have professed such a respect for me, what iniquity have you found in me, that one of you shall betray me? This went to his heart, as the unthankfulness of children grieves those who have *nourished and brought them up*, *Isa.* i. 2. see *Psalms* xcvi. 10. *Isa.* lxiii. 10.

Fifthly, The disciples quickly *take the alarm*; they knew their Master would neither deceive them, nor jest with them; and therefore *looked one upon another*, with a manifest concern, *doubting of whom he spake*.

1. But looking *one upon another*, they discovered the trouble they were in upon this notice given them; it struck such an horror upon them, that they knew not well which way to look, or what to say. They saw their Master *troubled*, and therefore they were troubled. This was at a feast where they were cheerfully entertained; but hence we must be taught to rejoice with trembling and as though we rejoiced not. When David wept for his son's rebellion, all his followers wept with him, *2 Sam.* xv. 30. so Christ's disciples here. Note, That which grieves Christ is and should be a grief to all that are his; particularly the scandalous miscarriages of those that are called by his name; *who is offended, and I burn not?*

2. Hereby they endeavoured to *discover the traitor*; they looked wistly in one another's face, to see who *blushed*, or by some disorder in the countenance, manifested guilt in the heart upon this notice, but while those who were faithful had their consciences so clear, that they could *lift up their faces without spot*; he that was false had his conscience so scared, that he was not ashamed, neither could he blush, and so no discovery could be made this way. Christ thus *perplexed* his disciples for a time, and put them into confusion, that he might *humble them, and prove them*, might excite in them a jealousy of themselves, and an indignation at the baseness of Judas. It is good for us sometimes to be put to a gaze, to be put to a pause.

Sixthly, The disciples were solicitous to get their Master to explain himself, and to tell them particularly whom he meant, for nothing but that can put them out of their present pain, for each of them thought they had as much reason to suspect themselves as any of their brethren; now,

1. Of all the disciples, John was *most fit to ask*, because he was the favourite, and sat next his Master, *ver.* 23. *There was leaning on Jesus's bosom, one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved*. It appears that this was John, by comparing *chap.* xxi. 20.

Observe, (1.) The particular kindness which Jesus had for him; he was known by this periphrasis, that he was *the disciple whom Jesus loved*. He loved them all, *ver.* 1. but John was particularly dear to him. His name signifies *gracious*. Daniel who was honoured with the *revelations* of the Old Testament, as John with the New, was *a man greatly beloved*, *Dan.* ix. 23. Note, Among the disciples of Christ, some are dearer to him than others.

(2.) His place and posture at this time. He was *leaning on Jesus's bosom*. Some say it was the fashion in those countries to sit at meat in a leaning posture, so that the second lay in the bosom of the first, and so on; which doth not seem probable to me, for in such a posture as that they could neither eat nor drink conveniently; but whether that were so or no, John now *leaned in his bosom*, and it seems to be an extraordinary expression of endearment used at this time. Note, There are some of Christ's disciples whom he lays in his bosom, who have more free and intimate communion with him than others. The Father loved the Son, and laid him *in his bosom*, *John* i. 18. and believers are in like manner one with Christ, *John* xvii. 21. This honour all the saints shall have shortly in the bosom of Abraham. They who lay themselves at *Christ's feet* he will lay them in *his bosom*.

(3.) Yet he conceals his name, because he himself was the penman of the story; he put this instead of his name to shew that he was *pleased with it*; it is his title of honour, that he was *the disciple whom Jesus loved*; as in David's and Solomon's court, there was one that was the *king's friend*; yet he doth not put his name down, to shew that he was not *proud of it*; nor would seem to boast of it. Paul in a like case saith, *I knew a man in Christ*.

Of all the disciples Peter was most forward to know, *ver.* 24. Peter sitting at some distance, beckoned to John, by some sign or other, to ask. Peter was generally the leading man, most apt to put himself forth; and where men's natural tempers lead them to be thus bold in answering and asking, if it be kept under the laws of humility and wisdom, it makes men very serviceable; God gives his gifts variously; but that the *forward* men in the church may not think too well of themselves, nor the *modest* be discouraged, it must be noted that it was not Peter, but John that was the *beloved disciple*. Peter was desirous to know, not only that he might be sure it was not he, but that knowing who it was, they might *withdraw* from him, and *guard* against him, and, if possible, *prevent* his design. It were a desirable thing we should think to know who in the church will deceive us: yet let this suffice; Christ knows, though we do not. The reason why Peter did not ask himself, was, because John had a much fairer opportunity, by the advantage of his seat at table, to whisper the question into the ear of Christ, and to receive a like private answer. It is good to improve our interest in those that are near to Christ, and to engage their prayers for us. Do we know any that we have reason to think lie in Christ's bosom? let us beg of them to speak a good word for us.

3. The question was asked accordingly, *ver.* 25. *He then lying at the breast of Jesus, and so having the convenience of whispering with him saith unto him, Lord, who is it?* Now here John shews,

1. A regard to his fellow-disciple; add to the motion he made. Though Peter had not the honour he had at this time, yet he did not therefore disdain to take the hint and intimation he gave him. Note, They who lie in Christ's bosom may often learn from those who lie at his feet something that will be profitable for them, and be minded of that which they did not of

themselves think of. John was willing to gratify Peter herein, having so fair an opportunity for it. As every one hath received the gift, so let him minister the same for a common good, *Rom.* xii. 6.

2. A *reverence* of his Master. Though he whispered that in Christ's ear, yet he called him *Lord*; the familiarity he was admitted to did not at all lessen his respect for his Master. It becomes us to use a reverence in expression, and to observe a decorum even in our secret devotions, which no eye is a witness to, as well as in public assemblies. The more intimate communion gracious souls have with Christ, the more sensible they are of his worthiness, and their own unworthiness, as *Gen.* xviii. 27.

4. Christ gave a *speedy answer* to this question, but whispering it in John's ear, for it appears, *ver.* 29. that the rest were still ignorant of the matter. *He it is to whom I shall give a sop, ψῆμα, a morsel, a crust; when I have dipped it in the sauce.* And when he had dipped the sop, John strictly observing his motions, he gave it to Judas; and Judas took it readily enough, not suspecting the design of it, but glad of a savoury bit to make up his mouth with.

1. Christ notified the traitor by a *sign*. He could have told John by name who he was; the adversary and enemy is that wicked Judas, he is the traitor, and none but he; but thus he would exercise the observation of John, and intimate what need his ministers have of a spirit of discerning; for the false brethren we are to stand upon our guard against, are not made known to us *by words* but *by signs*, they are to be known to us *by their fruit, by their spirit*; which requires great diligence and care to form a right judgment upon them.

2. That sign was a *sop*, which Christ gave him, a very proper sign, because it was the fulfilling of the scripture, *ver.* 18. that the traitor should be one that *eat bread with him*, that was at this time a fellow-commoner with him. It had likewise a significancy in it, and teacheth us, (1.) That Christ sometimes gives *sops* to traitors; worldly riches, honours and pleasures, are *sops* (if I may so speak) which Providence sometimes gives into the hands of *wicked men*. Judas perhaps thought himself a favourite because he had the sop, like Benjamin at Joseph's table, a mess by himself; thus the prosperity of fools, like a stupifying sop, helps to *destroy them*. (2.) That we must not be *outrageous* against those whom we know to be *very malicious* against us. Christ carried to Judas as kindly as to any at the table, though he knew he was then plotting his death, *If thine enemy hunger, feed him*, that is to do as Christ doth.

Secondly, Judas himself instead of being *convinced* hereby of his wickedness, was the more *confirmed* in it, and the warning given him was to him a savour of death unto death; for it follows,

1. The Devil hereupon *took possession of him*, *ver.* 27. *After the sop Satan entered into him*; not to make him melancholy or drive him distracted, which was the effect of his possessing some; not to hurry him into the fire, or into the water; happy had it been for him if that had been the worst of it, or if with the swine he had been choked in the sea; but Satan entered into him, to possess him with a prevailing prejudice against Christ and his doctrine, and a contempt of him, as one whose life was of small value, to excite in him a covetous desire of the wages of unrighteousness, and a resolution to stick at nothing for the obtaining of them. But,

1. Was not Satan in him before? How then is it said, that now *Satan entered into him*. Judas was all along a *devil*, *John* vi. 70. a son of perdition, but now Satan gained a more full possession of him, had a *more abundant entrance* into him. His purpose to betray his Master was now ripened into a fixed resolution; now he returned with seven other spirits more wicked than himself, *Luke* xi. 25. Note, 1. Though the devil is in every wicked man that doth his works, *Eph.* ii. 2. yet sometimes he enters more manifestly and more powerfully than at other times, when he puts them upon some enormous wickedness, which humanity and natural conscience startle at.

2. Betrayers of Christ have much of the devil in them. Christ speaks of the sin of Judas as greater than that of any of his persecutors.

2. How came Satan to enter into him *after the sop*. Perhaps he was presently aware that it was the discovery of him, and it made him *desperate* in his resolutions. Many are made worse by the gifts of Christ's bounty, and are confirmed in their impenitency by that which should have led them to repentance: *The coals of fire heaped upon their heads, instead of melting them hardens them*.

2. Christ hereupon dismissed him, and delivered him up to his own heart's lusts. *Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest do quickly*. This is not to be understood, as either advising him to his wickedness, or warranting him in it; but either, 1. As *abandoning* him to the conduct and power of Satan. Christ knew that Satan was entered into him, and had peaceable possession, and now he gives him up as hopeless. The various methods Christ had used for his conviction were ineffectual, and therefore what thou doest thou wilt do quickly; if thou art resolved to ruin thyself, go on, and take what comes. Note, When the evil spirit is willingly admitted, the good spirit justly withdraws. 2. Or, as challenging him to do his worst; thou art plotting against me, put thy plot in execution and welcome, the sooner the better, I do not fear thee, I am ready for thee. Note, Our Lord Jesus was very forward to suffer and die for us, and was impatient of delay in the perfecting of his undertaking. Christ speaks of Judas's betraying him as a thing he was now doing, though he was only purposing it. Those who are contriving and designing mischief, are in God's account doing mischief.

3. They that were at table understood not what he meant, because they did not hear what he whispered to John, *ver.* 23, 29. *No man at table, either the disciples, or any other of the guests, except John, knew for what intent he spake this to him*.

1. They did not suspect that Christ said it to Judas as a traitor, because it did not enter into their heads that Judas was such a one, or would prove so. Note, It is an *excusable dulness* in the disciples of Christ not to be *quick-sighted* in their censures. Most are ready enough to say, when they hear harsh things spoken in general, now *such a one* is meant, and now *such a one*; but Christ's disciples were so well taught to *love one another*, that they could not easily learn to suspect one another, *charity thinks no evil*.

2. They therefore took it for granted that he said it to him as a *trustee*, or *treasurer* of the household, giving him orders for the laying out of some money. And their surmises in this case *discover* to us for what uses and purposes our Lord Jesus commonly directed payments to be made out of that little stock he had: and so teach us how to honour the Lord with our substance. They concluded something to be laid out, either

(1.) In works of piety, *Buy those things that we have need of against the feast*. Though he borrowed a room to eat the passover in, yet he *bought* in provision for it. That is to be reckoned well bestowed, which is laid out upon *those things we have need of* for the maintenance of God's ordinances among us; and we have the less reason to grudge that expence now, because our gospel worship is nothing so chargeable as the legal worship was.

(2.) Or in works of charity, *that he should give something to the poor*. By this it appears, (1.) That our Lord Jesus, though he lived upon alms himself, (*Luke* viii. 3.) yet gave alms to the poor, a little out of a little. Though he might very well be excused, not only because he was poor himself,

self, but because he did so much good otherways, curing so many *gratis*; yet to set us an example, he gave for the relief of the poor out of that which he had for the subsistence of his family; see *Eph. iv. 28.* (2.) That the time of a religious feast was thought a proper time for works of charity. When he celebrated the passover he ordered something for the poor: When we experience God's bounty to us, that should make us bountiful to the poor.

4. Judas hereupon sets himself vigorously to pursue his design against him. He went away. Notice is taken,

1. Of his speedy departure, *he went out presently* and quitted the house. (1.) For fear of being more plainly discovered to the company, which if he were, he expected they would all fall upon him, and be the death of him, or at least of his project. (2.) He went out as one weary of Christ's company, and sick of the society of his apostles: Christ needed not to expel him, he expelled himself. Note, Withdrawing from the communion of the faithful, is commonly the overt-act of a backslider, and the beginning of an apostasy. (3.) He went out to prosecute his design, to look for those with whom he was to make his bargain, and to settle the agreement with them. Now Satan had got into him, he hurried him on with precipitation, lest he should see his error and repent of it.

2. Of the time of his departure, *It was night.*

1. Though it was *night*, an unseasonable time for business, yet Satan having entered into him, he made no difficulty of the coldness and darkness of the night. This should shame us out of our slothfulness and cowardice in the service of Christ, that the devil's servants are so earnest and venturesome in his service.

2. Because it was *night*, and that gave him advantage of privacy and concealment. He was not willing to be seen treating with the chief priests, and therefore chose the dark night as the fittest time for such works of darkness. They whose deeds are evil love darkness rather than light; see *Job xxiv. 13, &c.*

31. ¶ Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. 32. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him. 33. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. 34. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye may also love one another. 35. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

This and what follows, to the end of chap. xiv. was Christ's table-talk with his disciples. When supper was done Judas went out; but what did the Master and his disciples do, whom he left sitting at table? They applied themselves to profitable discourse, to teach us, as much as we can, to make conversation with our friends at table serviceable to religion. Christ begins this discourse, and the more forward we are humbly to promote that communication which is good, and to the use of edifying, the more like we are to Jesus Christ. Those especially that by their place, reputation, and gifts, command the company, to whom men give ear, ought to use the interests they have in other respects, as an opportunity of doing them good.

Now our Lord Jesus discourseth with them, and (probably) discourseth much more largely than is here recorded.)

First, Concerning the great mystery of his own death and sufferings, which they were as yet so much in the dark about, that they could not persuade themselves to expect the thing itself, much less did they understand the meaning of it, and therefore Christ gives them such instructions concerning it as made the offence of the cross to cease. Christ did not begin this discourse till Judas was gone out, for he was a false brother: The presence of wicked people is often a hindrance to good discourse. When Judas was gone out, Christ said, *Now is the Son of man glorified*; now Judas is discovered and discarded, that was a spot in their love-feast, and a scandal to their family, *Now is the Son of man glorified*. Note, Christ is glorified by the purifying of Christian societies; corruptions in his church are a reproach to him; the purging out of those corruptions rolls away the reproach. Or rather now Judas was gone to set the wheels a-going, in order to his being put to death, and the thing was likely to be effected shortly, *Now is the Son of man glorified*, meaning, *now he is crucified*.

1. Here is something which Christ instructs them in concerning his sufferings that was very comforting. Three things.

(1.) That he should himself be glorified in them. Now the Son of man is to be exposed to the greatest ignominy and disgrace, to be despitefully used to the last degree, and dishonoured both by the cowardice of his friends, and the insolence of his enemies; yet *now he is glorified*.

For, 1. Now he is to obtain a glorious victory over Satan and all the powers of darkness, to spoil them, and triumph over them. He is now girding on the harness to take the field against those adversaries of God and man, with as great an assurance as if he had put them off.

(2.) Now he is to work out a glorious deliverance for his people; by his death to reconcile them to God, and bring in an everlasting righteousness and happiness for them; to shed that blood which is to be an inexhaustible fountain of joys and blessings to all believers.

2. Now he is to give a glorious example of self-denial and patience under the cross, courage and contempt in the world, zeal for the glory of God, and love to the souls of men, as will make him to be for ever admired and had in honour. Christ had been glorified in many miracles he had wrought, and yet he speaks of his being glorified now in his sufferings, as if that were more than all his other glories in his humbled state.

(2.) That God the Father should be glorified in them. The sufferings of Christ were, (1.) The satisfaction of God's justice, and so God was glorified in them. Repentance was thereby made with great advantage for the wrong done him in his honour by the sin of man: The ends of the law were abundantly answered, and the glory of his government effectually asserted and maintained. (2.) They were the manifestation of his holiness and mercy. The attributes of God shine bright in redemption and providence, but much more in the work of creation; see *1 Cor. i. 24. 2 Cor. iv. 6.* God is love, and herein he hath commended his love.

(3.) That he should himself be greatly glorified after them, in consideration of God's being greatly glorified by them, *ver. 32.* Observe how he enlarges upon it.

1. He is sure that *God will glorify him*: and those whom God glorifies are glorious indeed. Hell and earth set themselves to vilify Christ, but God resolved to glorify him, and he did it. He glorified him in his sufferings by the amazing signs and wonders, both in heaven and earth which attended them, and extorted even from his crucifiers an acknowledgment

that he was the Son of God. But especially after his sufferings he glorified him, when he set him at his own right hand, gave him a name above every name.

2. That he will glorify him in himself, *in iura*. Either, (1.) In Christ himself: He will glorify him in his own person, and not only in his kingdom among men. This supposeth his speedy resurrection. A common person may be honoured after his death, in his memory or posterity, but Christ was honoured in himself. Or, (2.) In God himself. God will glorify him with himself as it is explained, *John xvii. 5. He shall sit down with the Father upon his throne*, *Rev. iii. 21.* This is true glory.

3. That he will glorify him straightway. He looked upon the joy and glory set before him not only as great, but as near; and his sorrows and sufferings short and soon over. Good services done to earthly princes often remain long unrewarded, but Christ had his preferments presently. It was but forty hours (or not so much) from his death to his resurrection, and forty days from thence to his ascension, so that it might well be said he was straightway glorified, *Psal. xvi. 10.*

4. All this in consideration of God's being glorified in and by his sufferings. Seeing God is glorified in him, and receives honour from his sufferings, God shall in like manner glorify him in himself, and give honour to him. Note, 1. In the exaltation of Christ there was a regard had to his humiliation, and a reward given for it. Because he humbled himself therefore God highly exalted him. If the Father be so great a gainer in his glory by the death of Christ we may be sure the Son shall be no loser in his. See the covenant between them, *Isa. liii. 12.* 2. Those who mind the business of glorifying God, no doubt shall have the happiness of being glorified with him.

2. Here is something that Christ instructs them concerning his sufferings, which was awakening, for as yet they were slow of heart to understand it. *Ver. 32. Little children, yet a little while I am with you, &c.*

Two things Christ here suggests to quicken his disciples to improve their present opportunities. Two serious words.

1. That his stay in this world, to be with them here, they would find to be very short. *Little children*. This compellation doth not speak so much their weakness as his tenderness and compassion; he speaks to them with the affection of a father, now he is about to leave them, and to leave blessings with them. Know this then, that yet a little while I am with you. Whether we understand it of the time betwixt his death, or betwixt his ascension, it comes much to one; he had but a little time to spend with them, and therefore,

(1.) Let them improve the advantage they now had. If they had any good question to ask, if they would have any advice, instruction, or comfort, let them speak quickly, for yet a little while I am with you. We must make the best of the helps we have for our souls while we have them, because we shall not have them long; they will be taken from us, or we from them.

(2.) Let them not dote upon his bodily presence, as if their happiness and comfort were bound up in that; no, they must think of living without it; not be always little children, but go alone without their nurses. Ways and means are appointed but for a little while, and are not to be rested in but pressed through to our rest, which they have a reference to.

2. That their following him to the other world to be with him there they would find to be very difficult. What he had said to the Jews, *chap. vii. 34.* he saith to his disciples; for they have need to be quickened by the same considerations that are propounded for the convincing and awakening of sinners. Christ tells them here, (1.) That when he was gone they would find a miss of him. *Ye shall seek me*, i. e. ye shall wish ye had me again with you. We are often taught the worth of mercies by the want of them. Though the presence of the Comforter yielded them real and effectual relief in straits and difficulties, yet it was not such a sensible satisfaction as his bodily presence would have been to those who had been used to that. But observe, Christ said to the Jews, *ye shall seek me and not find me*; but to the disciples he only saith, *Ye shall seek me*, intimating, that though they should not find his bodily presence no more than the Jews, yet they should find that which was tantamount, and should not seek in vain. When they sought his body in the sepulchre, though they did not find it, yet they sought to good purpose. 2. That whither he went they could not come, which suggests to them high thoughts of him, who was going to an invisible, inaccessible world, to dwell in that light which none can approach unto; and also low thoughts of themselves, and serious thoughts of their future state. Christ tells them they could not follow him, as Joshua told the people they could not serve the Lord, only to quicken them to so much the more diligence and care. They could not follow him to his cross, for they had not courage and resolution; it appeared they could not, when they all forsook him and fled. Nor could they follow him to his crown, for they had not a sufficiency of their own, nor was their work and warfare yet finished.

Secondly, He discourseth with them concerning the great duty of brotherly love, *ver. 34, 35. Ye shall love one another*. Judas was now gone out, and had proved himself a false brother, but they must not therefore harbour such jealousies and suspicions one of another as would be the bane of love; though there was one Judas among them, yet they were not all Judas's. Now the enmity of the Jews against Christ and his followers were swelling to the height, and they must expect such treatment as their Master, it concerned them by brotherly love to strengthen one another's hands.

Three arguments for mutual love are here urged,

1. The command of their Master, *ver. 34. A new commandment I give unto you*. He not only commands it as amiable and pleasant, not only counsels it as excellent and profitable, but commands it, and makes it one of the fundamental laws of his kingdom; it goes a-breast with the command of believing in Christ, *1 John iii. 23. 1 Pet. i. 23.* It is the command of our ruler, who has a right to give law to us; it is the command of our Redeemer, who gives us this law in order to the curing of our spiritual diseases, and the preparing of us for our eternal bliss. It is a new commandment; that is, (1.) It is a renewed commandment; it was a commandment from the beginning, *1 John ii. 7.* as old as the law of nature; it was the second great commandment of the law of Moses, yet because it is also one of the great commandments of the New Testament of Christ, the new lawgiver, it is called a new commandment; it is like an old book in a new edition corrected and enlarged. This commandment had been so corrupted by the traditions of the Jewish church, that when Christ revives it, and sets it in a true light, it might well be called a new commandment. Laws of revenge and retaliation were so much in vogue, and self-love had so much the ascendancy, that the law of brotherly love was forgotten as obsolete, and out of date; so that as it came from Christ now, it was new to the people. (2.) It is an excellent command, as a new song is an excellent song that has an uncommon gratefulness in it. (3.) It is an everlasting command; so strangely new as to be always so; as the new covenant which shall never decay, *Heb. viii. 13.* it shall be new to eternity when faith and hope are antiquated. (4.) As Christ gives it, it is new. Before it was, thou shalt love thy neighbour; now it is, ye shall love one another; it is pressed in a more winning way, when it is thus pressed as mutual duty owing to one another.

2. The

2. The example of their Saviour is another argument for brotherly love. *As I have loved you.* This is it that makes it a new commandment: that this rule and reason of love, as I have loved you, is perfectly new, and such as had been hid from ages and generations. Understand this, 1. Of all the instances of Christ's love to his disciples, which they had all experienced during the time he went in and out among them. He spoke kindly to them, concerned himself heartily for them, and for their welfare; instructed, counselled, and comforted them; prayed with them, and for them; vindicated them when they were accused, took their part when they were run down, and publicly owned them to be dearer to him than his mother, or sister, or brother: He reproved them for what was amiss, and yet compassionately bore with their failings, excused them, made the best of them, and passed by every oversight. Thus he had loved them, and just now washed their feet; and thus they must love one another, and love to the end. Or, 2. It may be understood of the special instance of love to all his disciples he was now about to give, in laying down his life for them. *Greater love hath no man than this,* John xv. 12. Has he thus loved us all? justly may he expect that we should be loving one to another. Not that we are capable of doing any thing of the same nature for each other, Psalm xlix. 7. but we must love one another in some respects after the same manner; we must see this before us as our copy and take directions from it. Our love to one another must be free and ready, laborious and expensive, constant and persevering; it must be love to the souls one of another. We must also love one another from this motive, and upon this consideration, *because Christ has loved us.* See Rom. xv. 1, 2. Eph. v. 2, 25. Phil. iii. 1—5.

3. The reputation of their profession. Ver. 35. *By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another.* Observe, we must have love, not only show love, but have it in the root and habit of it; and have it when there is not any present occasion to shew it; have it ready. Hereby it will appear that you are indeed my followers, by following me in this. Note, Brotherly love is the badge of Christ's disciples. By this he knows them, by this they may know themselves, 1 John iii. 14. and by this others may know them. This is the livery of his family, the distinguishing character of his disciples; this he would have them noted for, as that wherein they excelled all others, their loving one another. This was it that their Master was famous for; all that ever heard him, have heard of his love, his great love; and therefore if you see any people more than ordinary loving one to another, say certainly these are the followers of Christ, they have been with Jesus.

Now by this it appears, (1.) That the heart of Christ was very much upon it, that his disciples should love one another; in this they must be singular; whereas the way of the world is to be every one for himself, they should be hearty for one another. He doth not say, *By this shall men know that you are my disciples, if ye work miracles,* for a worker of miracles is but a cypher without charity, 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2. But if ye love one another from a principle of self-denial and gratitude to Christ, this Christ would have to be the proprium of his religion, the principal note of the true church. (2.) That it is the true honour of Christ's disciples to excel in brotherly love: Nothing will be more effectual than this to recommend them to the esteem and respect of others. See what a powerful attractive it was, Acts ii. 46, 47. Tertullian speaks of it as the glory of the primitive church, that the Christians were known by their lovingness to one another. Their adversaries took notice of it, and said, *See how these Christians love one another,* Apol. cap. 39. (3.) That if the followers of Christ do not love one another, they not only cast an unjust reproach upon their profession, but give just cause to suspect their own sincerity, *O Jesus! are these thy Christians?* these passionate, malicious, spiteful, ill-natured people; *Is this thy son's coat?* When our brethren stand in need of help from us, and we have an opportunity of being serviceable to them, when they differ in opinion and practice from us, or are any way rivals with, or provoking to us, and so we have an occasion to condescend, and forgive; in such cases as this will be known whether we have this badge of Christ's disciples.

36 ¶ Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. 37. Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. 38. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

In these verses we have,

First, Peter's curiosity and the check given to that.

1. Peter's question was bold and blunt, ver. 36. *Lord, whither goest thou?* Referring to what Christ had said, ver. 33. *Whither I go ye cannot come.* The practical instructions Christ had given them concerning brotherly love he overlooks, and asks no questions upon them, but fastens upon that, concerning which Christ purposely kept them in the dark. Note, It is a common fault among us, to be more inquisitive concerning things secret, which belong to God only, than concerning things revealed, which belong to us and our children; more desirous to have our curiosity gratified, than our consciences directed; to know what is done in heaven, than what we may do to get thither. It is easy to observe it in the converse of Christians, how soon a discourse of that which is plain and edifying is dropped, and no more said to it, the subject is exhausted; while a matter of doubtful disputation runs into an endless strife of words.

2. Christ's answer was instructive. He did not gratify him with any particular account of the world he was going to, nor ever foretold his glories and joys so distinctly as he did his sufferings; but said what he had said before, ver. 33. let that suffice, *Thou canst not follow me now, but shalt follow me hereafter.*

1. We may understand it of his following him to the cross. Thou hast not yet strength enough of faith and resolution to drink of my cup; and it appeared so by his cowardice, when Christ was suffering. For this reason, when Christ was seized, he provided for the safety of his disciples, *Let these go their way,* because they could not follow him now. Christ considers the frame of his disciples, and will not cut out for them that work and hardship which they are not as yet fit for; the day shall be as the strength is. Peter, though designed for martyrdom, cannot follow Christ now, but being come to his full growth, he shall follow him hereafter: he shall be crucified at last like his Master. Let him not think, that because he escapes suffering now he shall never suffer: From our missing the cross once, we must not infer that we shall never meet it; we may be reserved for greater trials than we have yet known.

2. We may understand it of his following him to the crown. Christ was now going to his glory, and Peter was very desirous to go with him; no

saith Christ, *Thou canst not follow me now,* thou art not yet ripe for heaven, nor hast thou finished thy work on earth. The journeyer must first enter to prepare a place for thee, but thou shalt follow me afterwards, after thou hast fought the good fight, and at the time appointed. Note, Believers must not expect to be glorified as soon as they are effectually called, for there is a wilderness between the Red sea and Canaan.

Secondly, Peter's confidence and the check given to that.

1. Peter makes a daring protestation of his constancy. He is not content to be left behind, but asks, *Lord, why cannot I follow thee now?* Dost thou question my sincerity and resolution? I promise thee, if there be occasion, I will lay down my life for thy sake. Some think Peter had a conceit, as the Jews had in the like case, chap. vii. 35. that Christ was designing a journey or voyage into some remote country, and he declared his resolution to go along with him wherever he went; but having heard his Master so often speak of his own sufferings, surely he could not understand him any otherwise but of his going away by death, and he resolves, as Thomas did, he will go and die with him; and better die with him, than live without him. See here, (1.) What an affectionate love Peter had to our Lord Jesus; *I will lay down my life for thy sake,* and I can do no more. I believe Peter spoke as he thought, and though he was inconsiderate, he was not insincere in this resolution. Note, Christ should be dearer to us than our own lives, which therefore when we are called to it we should be willing to lay down for his sake, Acts xx. 24. (2.) How ill he took it to have it questioned, intimated in that ex-postulation, *Lord, why cannot I follow thee now?* dost thou suspect my fidelity to thee? 1 Sam. xxix. 8. Note, It is with regret that true love hears its own sincerity arraigned, as John xxi. 17. Christ had indeed said, that one of them was a devil, but he was discovered and gone out, and therefore Peter thinks he may speak with the more assurance of his own sincerity, *Lord, I am resolved I will never leave thee,* and therefore *why cannot I follow thee?* We are apt to think we can do any thing, and take it amiss to be told; that this and the other we cannot do, whereas without Christ we can do nothing.

2. Christ gives him a surprising prediction of his inconstancy, ver. 38. Jesus Christ knows us better than we know ourselves, and has many ways of discovering those to themselves whom he loves, and will hide pride from.

1. He upbraids Peter with his confidence. *Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake?* Methinks he seems to have said this with a smile. Peter, thy promises are too large, too lavish to be relied on; thou dost not consider with what reluctance and struggle a life is laid down, and what a hard task it is to die; not so soon done as said. Christ hereby puts Peter upon second thoughts, not that he might retract his resolution, or recede from it, but that he might insert into it that necessary proviso, *Lord, thy grace enabling me, I will lay down my life for thy sake.* Wilt thou undertake to die for me? What, thou that tremblest to walk upon the water to me? What, thou that when sufferings were spoken of cried out, *Be it far from thee, Lord!* It was an easy thing to leave thy boats and nets to follow me, but not so easy to lay down thy life. His master himself struggled when it came to that, and the disciple is not greater than his Lord. Note, It is good for us to shame ourselves out of our presumptuous confidence in ourselves. Shall a bruised reed set up for a pillar? or a sickly child undertake to be a champion? What a fool am I to talk so big.

2. He plainly foretells his cowardice in the critical hour. To stop the mouth of his boasting, lest Peter should say it again, *yea, Master, that I will* Christ solemnly asserts it with, *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice.* He doth not say as afterwards, *this night,* for it seems to have been two nights before the passover; but shortly thou wilt have denied me thrice, within the space of one night; nay, within so short a space as between the first and last crowing of the cock; *The cock shall not crow,* i. e. shall not have crowed his crowing out till thou hast again and again denied me, and that for fear of suffering. The crowing of the cock is mentioned, (1.) To intimate that the trial in which he would miscarry thus, should be in the night, which was an improbable circumstance, but Christ's foretelling it was an instance of his infallible foresight. (2.) Because the crowing of the cock was to be the occasion of his repentance, which of itself would not have been, if Christ had not put this into the prediction. Christ not only foresaw that Judas would betray him, though he only in heart designed it, but he foresaw that Peter would deny him, though he did not design it, but the contrary. He knows not only the wickedness of sinners, but the weakness of saints.

Christ told Peter, (1.) That he would deny him, would renounce and abjure him, Thou wilt not only not follow me still, but be ashamed to own that ever thou didst follow me. (2.) That he would do this not once only by a hasty slip of his tongue, but after he had paused, would repeat a second and third time: and it proved too true. We commonly give it as a reason, why the prophecies of scripture are exercised darkly and figuratively, because if they did plainly describe the event, the accomplishment would thereby either be defeated, or necessitated by a fatality inconsistent with human liberty; and yet this plain and express prophecy of Peter's denying Christ; did neither, nor did in the least make Christ accessory to Peter's sin. But we may well imagine what a mortification it was to Peter's confidence of his own courage, to be told this; and to be told it in such a manner, as that he durst not contradict it, else he would have said as Hazael, *What! Is thy servant a dog?* This could not but fill him with confusion. Note, The most secure are commonly the least safe; and those most shamefully betray their own weakness, that most confidently presume upon their own strength, 1 Cor. x. 12.

C H A P. XIV.

This chapter is a continuation of Christ's discourse with his disciples after supper; when he had convicted and discarded Judas, he set himself to comfort the rest, who were full of sorrow upon what he had said of leaving them, and a great many good words and comfortable words he here speaks to them. The discourse is interlocutory, as Peter in the foregoing chapter; so Thomas, and Philip, and Jude, in this interposed their thoughts upon what he said according to the liberty he was pleased to allow them. Free conferences are as instructive as solemn speeches and more so. The general scope of this chapter is in the first verse; it is designed to keep trouble from their hearts; now in order to that, they must believe. And let them consider, (1.) Heaven as their everlasting rest, ver. 2, 3. (2.) Christ himself as their way, ver. 4—11. (3.) The great power they shall be clothed with by the prevalency of their prayers, ver. 12—14. (4.) The coming of another comforter, ver. 15—17. (5.) The fellowship and communion that should be between him and them after his departure, ver. 18—24. (6.) The instructions which the Holy Ghost should give them, ver. 25, 26. (7.) The peace Christ bequeathed to them, ver. 27. (8.) Christ's own cheerfulness in his departure, ver. 28—31. And this which he said to them, is designed for the comfort of all his faithful followers.

1. **L**ET not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2. In my Father's house are many mansions: If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also.

In these verses we have,

First, A general caution which Christ gives to his disciples, against trouble of heart, ver. 1. *Let not your heart be troubled.* They now began to be troubled, were entering into this temptation. Now here see,

1. How Christ took notice of it. Perhaps it was legible in their looks; it was said, chap. xiii. 22. *they looked one upon another with anxiety and concern,* and Christ looked upon them all, and observed it; however it was intelligible to the Lord Jesus, who is acquainted with all our secret undiscovered sorrows, with the wound that bleeds inwardly; he knows not only how we are afflicted, but how we stand affected under our afflictions, and how near they lie to our hearts; he takes cognizance of all the trouble which his people are at any time in danger of being overwhelmed with; he knows our souls in adversity.

Many things concurred to trouble the disciples now.

1. Christ had newly told them of the unkindnesses he should receive from some of them, and this troubled them all; Peter no doubt looked very sorrowful upon what Christ said to him, and all the rest were sorry for him and for themselves too, not knowing whose turn it would be to be told next of some ill thing or other they should do. As to this Christ comforts them; though a godly jealousy over ourselves is of great use to keep us humble and watchful, yet it must not prevail to the disquieting of our spirits and the damping of our holy joy.

2. He had newly told them of his own departure from them; that he should not only go away, but go away in a cloud of sufferings. They must shortly hear him loaded with reproaches, and those will be as a sword in their bones; must see him barbarously abused and put to death, and this also will be a sword piercing through their own souls, for they had loved him and chosen him, and left all to follow him. When we now look upon Christ pierced we cannot but mourn and be in bitterness, though we see the glorious issue and fruit of it, much more grievous must the sight be to them who could then look no further.

If Christ depart from them, (1.) They will think themselves shamefully disappointed; for they looked that this had been he that should have delivered Israel, and should have set up his kingdom in secular power and glory, and in expectation of that, had left all to follow him. Now, if he leave the world in the same circumstances of meanness and poverty in which he had lived, and worse, they are quite defeated. (2.) They will think themselves sadly deserted and expelled. They knew by experience what little presence of mind they had in difficult emergencies, and they could count upon nothing but being ruined and run down if they part with their Master. Now, in reference to all these, *Let not your hearts be troubled.* Here are three words, upon any of which the emphasis may significantly be laid.

(1.) Upon the word *troubled*, *ἡ καρδιά σου*; be not so troubled as to be put into a hurry and confusion, like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest. He doth not say, *Let not your hearts be sensible of the griefs, or sad because of them*, but be not ruffled and discomposed, be not cast down and disquieted, Psalm xlii. 5.

(2.) Upon the word *heart*; though the nation and city be troubled, though your little family and flock be troubled, yet *let not your hearts be troubled.* Keep possession of your own souls when you can keep possession of nothing else. The heart is the main fort; whatever you do, keep trouble from that, keep that with all diligence. The spirit must sustain the infirmity, therefore see that that be not wounded.

(3.) Upon the word *your*; you that are my disciples and followers, my redeemed, chosen, sanctified ones, however others are overwhelmed with the sorrows of this present time, be not you so, for you know better things; let the sinners in Zion tremble, but let the sons of Zion be joyful in their king. Herein Christ's disciples should do more than others, should keep their minds quiet, when every thing else is unquiet.

2. The remedy he prescribes against this trouble of mind, which he saw ready to prevail over them; in general, *believe, πιστεύετε.* (1.) Some read it in both parts imperatively, *believe in God*, and his perfections and providence, *believe also in me*, and my mediation. Build with confidence upon the great acknowledged principles of natural religion; that there is a God, that he is most holy, wise, powerful, and good; that he is the governor of the world, and has the sovereign disposal of all events; and comfort yourselves likewise with the peculiar doctrines of that holy religion which I have taught you. But, (2.) We read the former as an acknowledgment, that they did believe in God, for which he commends them; but if you would effectually provide against a stormy day, *believe also in me*; through Christ we are brought into covenant with God, and become interested in his favour and promise, which otherwise as sinners we must despair of, and the remembrance of God would have been our trouble; but by believing in Christ as the mediator between God and man, our belief in God becomes comfortable; and this is the will of God, that all men should honour the Son as they honour the Father, by believing in the Son, as they believe in the Father; and those that rightly believe in God, will believe in Jesus Christ, whom he has made known to them. And believing in God through Jesus Christ, is an excellent means of keeping trouble from the heart. The joys of faith are the best remedies against the griefs of sense; it is a remedy with a promise annexed to it; *the just shall live by faith*; a remedy with a *probatum est* annexed to it, *I had fainted unless I had believed.*

Secondly, Here is a particular direction to act faith upon the promise of eternal life, ver. 2, 3. He had directed them to trust to God, and to trust in him: but what must they trust God and Christ for? Trust them for a happiness to come, when *this body and this world shall be no more*; and for a happiness to last as long as the immortal soul and the eternal world shall last. Now this is proposed as a sovereign cordial under all the troubles of this present time, to which there is that in the happiness of heaven which is admirably adapted and accommodated. All the saints have encouraged themselves with this in their greatest extremities, *That heaven would make amends for all.*

Let us see how this is suggested here:

1. Believe and consider that really there is such a happiness: *In my Father's house there are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you.*

(1.) See under what notion the happiness of heaven is here represented; as mansions, many mansions in Christ's Father's house. 1. Heaven is a house, not a tent or tabernacle; it is a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2. It is a Father's house; my Father's house; and his Father is our Father, to whom he was now ascending: so that in right of their

elder brother all true believers shall be welcome to that happiness as to *their home*. It is his house who is King of kings and Lord of lords, dwells in light, and inhabits eternity. 3. There are mansions there. That is, (1.) *Distinct dwellings*, an apartment for each; perhaps there is an allusion to the priest's chambers that were about the temple. In heaven there are accommodations for particular saints; though all shall be swallowed up in God, yet our individuation shall not be lost there; every Israelite had his lot in Canaan, and every elder a seat, Rev. iv. 4. (2.) *Durable dwellings*, *Μοναί*, from *μῦνα*, *maneo*, abiding places. The house itself is lasting; our estate in it is not for a term of years but for perpetuity. Here we are as in an inn, in heaven we shall gain a settlement. The disciples had quitted their houses to attend Christ, who had not where to lay their head, but the mansions in heaven will make them amends. 4. They are many mansions, for there are many sons to be brought to glory, and he exactly knows their number; nor will be straitened for room by the coming of more company than he expects. He had told Peter that he should follow him, chap. xiii. 36. but let not the rest be discouraged, in heaven there are many mansions for them all. *Rehoboth*, Gen. xxvi. 22.

(2.) See what assurance we have of the reality of the happiness itself, and the sincerity of the proposal of it to us; *If it were not so, I would have told you.* If you had deceived yourselves when you quitted your livelihoods, and ventured your lives for me in prospect of a happiness future and unseen, I would soon have undeceived you. The assurance is built, (1.) Upon the veracity of his word. It is implied, if there were not such a happiness, valuable and attainable, I would not have told you there was. (2.) Upon the sincerity of his affection to them. As he is true, and would not impose upon them himself, so he is kind, and would not suffer them to be imposed upon. If either there were no such mansions, and none designed for them, who had left all to follow him, he would have given them timely notice of the mistake, that they might have made an honourable retreat to the world again, and have made the best hand they could of it. Note, Christ's good will to us is a great encouragement to our hope in him. He loves us too well, and means us too well to disappoint the expectations of his own railing; or to leave those to be of all men most miserable, who have been of him most obsequious.

2. Believe and consider, that the design of Christ's going away was to prepare a place in heaven for his disciples. You are grieved to think of my going away, whereas I go on your errand, as the forerunner, I am to enter for you. He went to prepare a place for us; that is, 1. To take possession for us, as our advocate or attorney, and so to secure our title as indefeasible. Livery of seisin was given to Christ, for the use and behoof of all that should believe on him. 2. To make provision for us as our friend and father. The happiness of heaven, though prepared before the foundation of the world, yet must be further fitted up for man in his fallen state. It consisting much in the presence of Christ there, it was therefore necessary he should go before, to enter into that glory which his disciples were to share in: Heaven would be an unready place for a Christian if Christ were not there. He went to prepare a table for them, to prepare thrones for them, Luke xxii. 30. Thus he designed to bespeak the fitness of heaven's happiness for the saints for whom it is prepared.

3. Believe and consider, that therefore he would certainly come again in due time, to fetch them to that blessed place which he was now going to possess for himself, and prepare for them, ver. 3. *If I go and prepare a place for you, if that be the errand of my journey, you may be sure, when every thing is ready, I will come again, and receive you for myself*, so that you shall follow me hereafter, *that where I am, there ye may be also.* Now these are comfortable words indeed;

1. That Jesus Christ will come again, *ἔρχομαι*, I do come; intimating the certainty of it, that he will come, and that he is daily coming. We say we are coming, when we are busy in preparing for our coming. Note, The belief of Christ's second coming, which he has given us the assurance of, is an excellent preservative against trouble of heart, Phil. iv. 5. *Jam. v. 8.*

2. That he will come again, to receive all his faithful followers to himself. He sends for them privately at death, and gathers them one by one; but they are to make their public entry in solemn state all together at the last day, and then Christ himself will come to receive them, to conduct them out of the abundance of his grace, and to welcome them out of the abundance of his love; he will hereby testify the utmost respect and endearment imaginable: The coming of Christ is, in order to our gathering together unto him, 2 Thess. ii. 1.

3. That where he is, there they shall be also. This speaks the same that many other scriptures speak, that the quintessence of heaven's happiness is being with Christ there, John xvii. 24. Phil. i. 23. 1 Thess. iv. 17. Christ speaks of his being there as now present, *that where I am; where I am to be shortly, where I am to be eternally, there ye shall be shortly, there ye shall be eternally*: Not only there, in the same place; but there, in the same state: Not only spectators of his glory, as the three disciples on the mount, but sharers in it.

4. That this may be inferred from his going to prepare a place for us, for his preparations shall not be in vain; he will not build and furnish lodgings, and let them stand empty; he will be the finisher of that which he is the author of; if he have prepared the place for us, he will prepare us for it, and in due time put us in possession of it: As the resurrection of Christ is the assurance of our resurrection, so his ascension, victory, and glory, is an assurance of ours.

4. ¶ And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. 5. Thomas said unto him, Lord we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? 6. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. 7. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. 8. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 9. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? 10. Believeest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. 11. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very word's sake.

Christ having set the happiness of heaven before them as the end, here shews them himself as the way to it, and tells them, they were better acquainted both with the end they were to aim at, and with the way they were to walk in, than they thought they were: *Ye know, i. e. Ye may know; it is none of secret things which belong not to you, but one of the things revealed; you need not ascend into heaven, or go down into the deep, for the word is nigh you, Rom. x. 6—8. level to you.* 2. *Ye do know; ye know that which is the name, and which is the way, though perhaps not as the home, and as the way: You have been told it, and cannot but know, if you would recollect and consider it.* Note, Jesus Christ is willing to make the best of his people's knowledge, though they were weak and defective in it: He knows the good that is in them, better than they do themselves, and is certain they have that knowledge, and faith, and love, which they themselves are not sensible of, or not certain of.

The word of Christ gave occasion to two of his disciples to address themselves to him, and he answers them both.

First, Thomas enquired concerning the way, ver. 5. without any apology for contradicting his Master; he said, *Lord, we know not whither thou goest, to what place, or to what state, and how can we know the way, in which we must follow thee? We can neither guess at it, nor enquire it out, but must still be as a loss.* Christ's testimony concerning their knowledge, made them more sensible of their ignorance, and more inquisitive after further light. Thomas here shews more modestly than Peter, who thought he could follow Christ now: Peter was the more solicitous to know *whether Christ went*: Thomas here though he complains that he did not know that, yet seems most solicitous to know the way. Now, 1. His confession of his ignorance was commendable enough, if good men be in the dark, and know but in part, yet they are willing to own their defects; but, 2. The cause of ignorance was culpable: They know not *whither* Christ went, because they dreamed of a temporal kingdom in external pomp and power, and doted upon that; notwithstanding what he had said again and again to the contrary; Hence it was, that, when Christ spoke of going away and their following him, their fancy run upon his going to some remarkable city or other, Bethlehem or Nazareth or Capernaum, or some of the cities of the Gentiles, as David to Hebron, *there to be anointed king, and to restore the kingdom to Israel*, and which way this place lay, where these castles in the air were to be built, east, west, north, or south, they could not tell, and therefore knew not the way. Thus still we think ourselves more in the dark than we need to be concerning the future state of the church, because we expect its worldly prosperity, whereas it is spiritual advancement that the promise points at. Had Thomas understood, as he might have done, that Christ was going to the invisible world, the world of spirits, to which spiritual things only have a reference, he would not have said, *Lord, we do not know the way.*

Now this complaint of their ignorance, which included a desire to be taught, Christ gives a full answer, ver. 6, 7. Thomas had enquired, both *whither he went, and what was the way*, and Christ answers both those enquiries, and makes good what he had said, that they would have needed no answer if they had understood themselves right; for they knew him, and he was the way; they knew the Father, and he was the end; and therefore, *whither I go ye know, and the way ye know*; Believe in God as the end, and in me as the way, ver. 1. and you do all you should do.

1. He speaks of himself as the way, ver. 6. *Dost thou not know the way? I am the way, and I only, for no man comes to the Father, but by me.* Great things Christ here saith of himself, shewing us,

(1.) The nature of his mediation; he is the way, the truth, and the life. Let us consider these first distinctly.

1. Christ is the way, the highway spoken of, Isa. xxxv. 8. Christ was his own way, for by his own blood he entered into the holy place, Heb. ix. 12. and he is our way; for we enter by him: By his doctrine and example he teacheth us our duty, by his merit and intercession he procures us our happiness, and so he is the way. In him God and man meet, and are brought together. We could not get to the tree of life in the way of innocence, but Christ is another way to it: By Christ, as the way, an intercourse is settled and kept up between heaven and earth; the angels of God ascend and descend; our prayers go to God, and his blessings come to us by him; this is the way that leads to rest, the good old way: The disciples followed him, and Christ tells them they followed the road, and, while they continued following him, they would never be out of their way.

2. He is the truth: 1. As truth is opposed to figure and shadow, Christ is the substance of all the Old Testament types, which are therefore said to be the figures of the true, Heb. ix. 24. Christ is the true manna, John vi. 32. the true tabernacle, Heb. viii. 1. 2. As truth is opposed to falsehood and error, the doctrine of Christ is true doctrine; when we enquire for truth, we need learn no more, but the truth as it is in Jesus. 3. As truth is opposed to fallacy and deceit; he is true to all that trust in him, as true as truth itself, 2 Cor. i. 20.

3. He is the life; for we are alive unto God, only in and through Jesus Christ, Rom. vi. 11. Christ formed in us is that to our souls, which our souls are to our bodies: Christ is the resurrection and the life.

Let us also consider these jointly, and with reference to each other. Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; that is, 1. He is the beginning, the middle, and the end: In him we may set out, go on, and finish: As the truth, he is the guide of our way; as the life, he is the end of it. 2. He is the true and living way, Heb. x. 10. there is truth and life in it, as well as at the end of it. He is the true way to life, the only true way; other ways may seem right, but the end of them is the way of death.

(2.) The necessity of his mediation; no man cometh to the Father but by me. Fallen man must come to God as a Judge, but cannot come to him as a Father, otherwise than by Christ as Mediator. We cannot perform the duty of coming to God by repentance and the acts of worship, without the Spirit and grace of Christ, nor obtain the happiness of coming to God as our Father, without his merit and righteousness; he is the High priest of our profession, our Advocate.

2. He speaks of his Father as the end, ver. 7. *If ye had known me aright, ye should, or would, have known my Father also; and from henceforth, by the glory you have seen in me, and the doctrine ye have heard from me, ye know him and have seen him.* Here is,

(1.) A tacit rebuke to them for their dulness and carelessness in acquainting themselves with Jesus Christ, though they had been his constant followers and associates: *If ye had known me.*—They know him, and yet did not know him so well as they might, and should have known him; They know him to be the Christ, but did not follow on to know God in him. Christ had said to the Jews, chap. viii. 19. *If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also; and here the same to his disciples: for it is hard to say, which is more strange, the wilful ignorance of those that are enemies to the light, or the defects and mistakes of the children of light, that have had such opportunities of knowledge. If they had known Christ aright, they would have known that his kingdom is spiritual, and not of this world; that he came down from heaven, and therefore must return to heaven; and then would have known his Father also, would have known whither he de-*

signed to go, when he said, *I go to the Father*, to a glory in the other world not in this. If we know Christianity better, we should better know natural religion.

(2.) A favourable intimation that he was well satisfied concerning their sincerity, notwithstanding the weakness of their understanding; and from henceforth, from my giving you this hint, which will serve as a key to all the instructions I have given you hitherto, let me tell you, *ye know him, and have seen him*, inasmuch as ye know me, and have seen me; for in the face of Christ we see the glory of God, as we see a father in his son that resembles him. Christ tells his disciples, they were not so ignorant as they seemed to be; for though *little children*, yet they had known the Father, 1 John ii. 13. Note, Many of the disciples of Christ have more knowledge and more grace than they think they have, and Christ takes notice of and is well pleased with that good in them which they themselves are not aware of; for they that know God, do not presently know that they know him, 1 John ii. 3.

Secondly, Philip enquired concerning the Father, ver. 8. and Christ answered him, ver. 8, 10, 11. where observe,

1. Philip's request for some extraordinary discovery of the Father: He was not so forward to speak as some others of them were, and yet, from an earnest desire of further light, he cries out, *Shew us the Father.* Philip listened to what Christ said to Thomas, and listened upon the last words, *Ye have seen him*: Nay, saith Philip, that is it we want, that is it we would have, *Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.*

(1.) This supposeth an earnest desire of acquaintance with God as a Father; the petition is, *Shew us the Father*; give us to know him in that relation to us; and this he begs, not for himself only, but for the rest of the disciples; the plea is, *It sufficeth us*: He not only professeth it himself, but will pass his word for his fellow-disciples: Grant us but one sight of the Father, and we have enough. Jansenius saith, though Philip did not mean it, yet the Holy Ghost, by his mouth, designed here to teach us, that the satisfaction and happiness of a soul consist in the vision and fruition of God, Psal. xvi. 1. xvii. 5. In the knowledge of God the understanding rests, and is at the top of its ambition; in the knowledge of God as our Father the soul is satisfied; a sight of the Father is a heaven upon earth, fills us with joy unspeakable.

(2.) As Philip speaks it here, it intimates that he was not satisfied with such a discovery of the Father as Christ thought fit to give them, but he would prescribe to him, and press upon him something further, and no less than some visible appearance of the glory of God, like that to Moses, Exod. xxxiii. 22. and to the elders of Israel, Exod. xxiv. 10, 11. Let us see the Father with our bodily eyes, as we see thee, and it sufficeth us; we will trouble thee with no more questions, *Whither thou goest*. And so it discovers not only the weakness of his faith, but his ignorance of the gospel way of manifesting the Father, which is spiritual and not sensible: Such a sight of God he thinks would suffice them, and yet those who did thus see him were not sufficed, but soon corrupted themselves, and made a graven image. Christ's institutions have provided better for the confirmation of our faith, than our own inventions would.

2. Christ's reply, referring him to the discoveries already made of the Father, ver. 9, 10, 11.

(1.) He refers him to what he had seen, ver. 9. He upbraids him with his ignorance and inadvertency: *Have I been so long time with you? now above three years intimately conversant with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? Now, he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Wilt thou ask for that which thou hast already? Now here,*

1. He reproves him for two things:

(1.) For not improving his acquaintance with Christ, as he might have done, to a clear and distinct knowledge of him: *Hast thou not known me, Philip? whom thou hast followed so long, and conversed with so much? Philip, the first day he came to him, declared that he knew him to be the Messiah, John i. 45. and yet to this day did not know the Father in him.* Many that have good knowledge in the scripture, and divine things, fall short of the attainments justly expected from them, for want of compounding the ideas they have and going on to perfection. Many know Christ, who yet do not know what they might know of him, nor see what they should see in him.

That which aggravated Philip's dulness was, that he had had so long an opportunity of improvement: *I have been so long time with thee.* Note, The longer we enjoy the means of knowledge and grace, the more inexcusable we are, if we be found defective in grace and knowledge; Christ expects our proficiency should be in some measure according to our standing, and that we should not be always babes. Let us thus reason with ourselves; have I been so long a hearer of sermons, a student in the scripture, a scholar in the school of Christ, and yet so weak in the knowledge of Christ, and so unskilful in the word of righteousness?

(2.) He reproves him for his infirmity in the prayer made, *Shew us the Father.* Note, Herein appears much of the weakness of Christ's disciples, that they know not what to pray for as they ought, Rom. viii. 26. but often ask amiss, James iv. 3. for that which either is not promised, or is already bestowed in the sense of the promise, as here,

2. He instructs him, and gives him a maxim, which not only in general magnifies Christ, and leads us to the knowledge of God in him, but justifies what Christ had said, ver. 7. *Ye know the Father, and have seen him*; and answers what Philip had asked, *Shew us the Father? Why, saith Christ, the difficulty is soon over, for he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.* 1. All that saw Christ in the flesh, might have seen the Father in him, if Satan had not blinded their minds, and kept them from a sight of Christ, as the image of God, 2 Cor. iv. 4. 2. All that saw Christ by faith did see the Father in him, though they were not suddenly aware that they did so. In the light of Christ's doctrine, they saw God as the Father of lights; in the miracles, they saw God as the God of power, the finger of God. The holiness of God shone in the spotless purity of Christ's life, and his grace in all the acts of grace he did.

(2.) He refers him to what he had reason to believe, ver. 10, 11. *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? and therefore in seeing me, thou hast seen the Father. Hast thou not believed this? If not, take my word for it, and believe it now.*

1. See here what it is, which we are to believe; *that I am in the Father, and the Father in me*: that is, as he had said, chap. x. 30. *I and my Father are one.* He speaks of the Father and himself as two persons, and yet so one as never any two were, or can be. In knowing Christ as God of God, light of lights, very God of very God, begotten not made, and as bring of one substance with the Father by whom all things are made, we know the Father; and in seeing him thus we see the Father: In Christ we behold more of the glory of God, than Moses did at Mount Horeb.

2. See here what inducements we have to believe this, and they are two: We must believe it,

(1.) For his word's sake: *The words that I speak to you, I speak not of myself: See John viii. 16. My doctrine is not mine.* But he said seemed to them

them careless as the word of man, speaking his own thoughts at his own pleasure; but really it was the wisdom of God that indited it, and the will of God that enforced it: *He spake not of himself only, but the mind of God according to the eternal counsels.*

(2.) For his works' sake: *The Father that dwelleth in me, he doth them; and therefore believe me for their sakes.* Observe, 1. *The father* is said to dwell in him, *ο υιος παρεισιν*, he abideth in me, by the inseparable union of the divine and human nature; never had God such a temple to dwell in on earth, as the body of the Lord Jesus, John ii. 21. here was the true *Shechinah*, of which that in the tabernacle was but a type: *The fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily*, Col. ii. 9. *The Father so dwells in Christ*, as that in him he may be found, as a man where he dwells; *Seek ye the Lord, seek him in Christ, and he will be found*, for in him he dwells. 2. *He doth the works.* Many works of power, and works of mercy Christ did, and the Father did them in him; and the work of redemption in general was God's own work. 3. We are bound to believe this, for the very works' sake. As we are to believe the being and perfections of God, for the sake of the works of creation, which declare his glory; so we are to believe the revelation of God to man in Jesus Christ, for the sake of the works of the Redeemer; those mighty works, which, by shewing forth themselves (Matt. xiv. 2.) shew forth him, and God in him. Note, Christ's miracles are proofs of his divine mission, not only for the conviction of infidels, but for the confirmation of the faith of his own disciples, John ii. 11.—v. 36.—x. 37.

12. ¶ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. 13. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

The disciples, as they were full of grief to think of parting with their Master, so they were full of care what would become of themselves when he was gone; while he was with them he was a support to them, kept them in countenance, kept them in heart; but if he leave them, they will be as *sheep having no shepherd*, an easy prey to those who sought to run them down. Now, to silence these fears, Christ here assures them, that they should be clothed with powers sufficient to bear them out. As Christ had all power, they in his name should have great power, both in heaven, and in earth.

1. Great power on earth, ver. 12. *He that believeth on me* (as I know you do) *the works that I do shall ye do also.* This doth not weaken the argument Christ had taken from his works to prove himself one with the Father, that others should do us great works, but rather strengthens it; for the miracles which the apostles wrought were wrought in his name, and by faith in him; and this magnifies his power more than any thing, that he not only wrought miracles himself, but gave power to others to do so too. Two things he assures them of:

(1.) That they should be enabled to do such works as he had done, and that they should have a more ample power for the doing of them, than they had had when he first sent them forth, *Matth. x. 8.* Did Christ heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead? so should they. Did he convince and convert sinners, and draw multitudes to him? so should they. Though he should depart, the work should not cease, nor fall to the ground, but should be carried on as vigorously and successfully as ever; and it is still in the doing.

2. That they should do greater works than these:

1. In the kingdom of nature they should work greater miracles. No miracle is little, but some to our apprehensions seem greater than others. Christ had healed with the hem of the garment, but Peter with his shadow, *Acts v. 15.* Paul by the handkerchief that had touched him, *Acts xix. 12.* Christ wrought miracles for two or three years in one country, but his followers wrought miracles in his name for many ages in divers countries. *Ye shall do greater works*, if there were occasion, for the glory of God. The prayer of faith, if at any time it had been necessary should have removed mountains.

2. In the kingdom of grace: They should obtain greater victories by the gospel, that had been obtained while Christ was upon earth. And the truth is, the captivating of so great a part of the world to Christ, under such outward disadvantages, was the miracle of all. I think this refers especially to the gift of tongues, which was the immediate effect of the pouring out of the Spirit, which was a constant miracle upon the mind, in which words are framed, and which was made to serve so glorious an intention, as that of spreading the gospel to all nations in their own language: This was a greater sign to them which believed not (*1 Cor. xiv. 22.*) and more powerful for their conviction, than any other miracle whatsoever.

The reason Christ gives for this is, *because I go unto my Father.* 1. *Because I go*, it would be requisite you should have such a power, lest the work suffer damage by my absence. 2. *Because I go to the Father*, I shall be in a capacity to furnish you with such a power, for I go to the Father to find the Comforter, from whom you shall receive power, *Acts i. 8.* The wonderful works which they did in Christ's name, were part of the glories of his exalted state, when he ascended on high, *Eph. iv. 8.*

2. Great power in heaven, *Whatsoever ye shall ask, that will I do*, ver. 13, 14. as Israel, that was a prince with God. Therefore you shall do such mighty works, because you have such an interest in me, and I in my Father. Observe,

1. In what way they were to keep up communion with him, and fetch in power from him, when he was gone to the Father; by prayer. When dear friends are to be removed at a distance from each other, they provide for the settling of a correspondence; thus when Christ was going to his Father, he tells his disciples how they might write to him upon every occasion, and send it by a safe and ready way of conveyance, without danger of miscarriage, or lying by the way; let me hear from you by prayer, the prayer of faith, and you shall hear from me by the Spirit: This was the old way of intercourse with heaven, ever since men began to call upon the name of the Lord; but Christ by his death has laid it more open, and it is still open to us. Here is,

(1.) Humility prescribed: *Ye shall ask.* Though they had quitted all for Christ, they could demand nothing of him as a debt, but must ask it as an alms, must be humble supplicants, beg or starve, beg or perish.

(2.) Liberty allowed. Ask any thing, any thing that is good and proper for you, any thing, provided you know what you ask, you may ask, you may ask for assistance in your work, for a mouth and wisdom, for preservation out of the hands of your enemies; for power to work miracles when there is occasion, for the success of the ministry in the conversion of souls; ask to be informed, directed, vindicated: Occasions vary, but they shall be welcome to the throne of grace upon every occasion.

2. In what name they were to present their petitions, ask in my name.

To ask in Christ's name, is, (1.) To plead his merit and intercession, and to depend upon that plea. The Old Testament saints had an eye to this when they prayed for the Lord's sake, *Dan. ix. 17.* and for the sake of the anointed, *Psal. lxxxiv. 9.* but Christ's mediation is brought to a clearer light by the gospel, and so we are enabled more expressly to ask in his name. When Christ dictated the Lord's prayer, this was not inserted, because they did not fully understand this matter as they should afterwards, when the Spirit was poured out. If we ask in our own name, we cannot expect to speed, for being strangers we have no name in heaven, being sinners we have an ill name there; but Christ's is a good name, well known in heaven, and very precious.

(2.) It is to aim at his glory and honour in our prayers, and to seek that as our highest end in all our prayers.

3. What success they should have in their prayer; what you ask, that will I do, ver. 13. And again, ver. 14. *I will do it.* You may be sure I will: not only it shall be done, I will see it done, or give orders for the doing of it, but I will do it; for he has not only the interest of an intercessor, but the power of a sovereign prince, who sits at the right hand of God, the hand of action, and has the doing of all in the kingdom of God. By faith in his name we may have what we will for the asking.

4. For what reason their prayers should speed so well; that the Father may be glorified in the Son. That is, 1. This they ought to aim at; and have their eye upon in asking. In this all our desires and prayers should meet as in their centre; to this they must all be directed, that God in Christ may be honoured by our services, and in our salvation. *Hallowed be thy name*, is an answered prayer, and is put first, because if the heart be sincere in that it doth in a manner consecrate all the other petitions. 2. This Christ will aim at in granting, and for the sake of this will do what they ask, that hereby the glory of the Father in the Son might be manifested. The wisdom, power, and goodness of God were magnified in the Redeemer, when by a power derived from him, and exerted in his name, and for his service, his apostles and ministers were enabled to do such great things, both in the proofs of their doctrine, and in the successes of it.

15. ¶ If ye love me, keep my commandments. 16. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17. Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Christ not only proposeth such things to them as were the matter of their comfort, but here promiseth to send the Spirit, whose office it should be to be their comforter, to impress those things upon them.

1. He promiseth to this a memorandum of duty; ver. 15. *If ye love me keep my commandments.* Keeping the commandments of Christ is here put for the practice of godliness in general, and for the faithful and diligent discharge of their office as apostles in particular. Now observe, 1. When Christ is comforting them, he bids them keep his commandments; for we must not expect comfort but in the way of duty. The same word (*παρακαλιω*) signifies both exhort and to comfort. 2. When they were in care what they should do now their Master was leaving them, and what would become of them now, he bids them keep his commandments, and then nothing could come amiss to them. In difficult times our care concerning the events of the day should be swallowed up in a care concerning the duty of the day. 3. When they were shewing their love to Christ by their grieving to think of his departure, and the sorrow which filled their hearts upon the foresight of that, he bids them, if they would shew their love to him, do it not by those weak and feminine passions, but by their conscientious care to perform their trust, and by an universal obedience to his commands; that is better than sacrifice, better than tears, *Lovest thou me? Feed my lambs.* 4. When Christ has given them precious promises, of the answer of their prayers, and the coming of the Comforter, he laid down this as a limitation of the promises, provided you keep my commandments, from a principle of love to me. Christ will not be an advocate for any but those that will be ruled and advised by him as their counsel. Follow the conduct of the Spirit, and you shall have the comfort of the Spirit.

2. He promiseth this great and unspeakable blessing to them, ver. 16, 17. First, It is promised that they shall have another Comforter. This is the great New Testament promise, *Acts i. 4.* as that of the Messiah was of the Old Testament; a promise adapted to the present distress of the disciples, who were in sorrow, and needed a comforter. Observe here,

1. The blessing promised; *αλλος παρακλησις*. The word is used only here in these discourses of Christ's, and *1 John ii. 1.* where we translate it an advocate. The Rhemist, and Dr. Hammond, are for retaining the Greek word *paraclete*; we read *Acts ix. 31.* of the *παρακλησις τε αγω πινυμαι*, the comforter, the Holy Ghost, including his whole office as a paraclete.

(1.) You shall have another advocate. The office of the Spirit was to be Christ's advocate with them and others, to plead his cause, and take care of his concerns on earth; to be vicarius Christi, as one of the ancients calls him; and to be their advocate, with their opposers. When Christ was with them he spoke for them as there was occasion, but now he is leaving them they shall not be run down, the Spirit of the Father shall speak in them, *Matt. x. 19, 20.* And the cause cannot miscarry that is pleaded by such an advocate.

(2.) You shall have another master or teacher, another exhorter. While they had Christ with them he excited and exhorted them to their duty, but now he is going, he leaves one with them that shall do this as effectually, though silently. *Janseus* thinks the most proper word to render it by, is a patron, one that shall both instruct and protect you.

(3.) Another Comforter. Christ was expected as the consolation of Israel. One of the names of the Messiah among the Jews was *Menahem*, the comforter. The Targum calls the days of the Messiah, the years of consolation. Christ comforted his disciples when he was with them, and now he was leaving them in their greatest need he promiseth them another.

2. The giver of this blessing, the Father shall give him, my Father, and your Father; it includes both. The same that gave the Son to be our Saviour, will give his Spirit to be our comforter, pursuant to the same design. The Son is said to send the Comforter, *chap. xv. 26.* but the Father is the prime agent.

3. How this blessing is procured, by the intercession of the Lord Jesus; I will pray the Father. He said, ver. 14. *I will do it*; here he saith, *I will pray for it*, to shew not only that he is both God and man, but that he is both King and Priest. As Priest he is ordained for men to make intercession, as King he is authorized by the Father to execute judgment. When Christ saith, *I will pray the Father*, it doth not suppose that the Father is unwilling, or must be importuned to it, but only that the gift of the Spirit

is a fruit of Christ's mediation, purchased by his merit, and taken out by his intercession.

4. The continuance of this blessing, *That he may abide with you for ever.* That, 1. *With you*, as long as you live: You shall never know the want of a comforter, nor lament his departure, as you are now lamenting mine. Note, It should support us under the loss of those comforts which were designed us for a time, that there are everlasting consolations provided for us. It was not expedient Christ should be with them *for ever*, for they who were designed for public service must not always live a college life, they must disperse, and therefore a comforter that would be with them all, in all places alike, wheresoever dispersed, and however distressed, was alone fit to be with them for ever. 2. *With your successors*, when you are gone, to the end of time; your successors in Christianity, in the ministry. 3. If we take *for ever* in its utmost extent, the promise will be accomplished in those consolations of God which will be the eternal joy of all the saints; *Pleasures for evermore.*

Secondly, This comforter is the *Spirit of truth, whom ye know*, ver. 16, 17. They might think it impossible to have a comforter equivalent to him who is the *Son of God*; yea, saith Christ, you shall have the Spirit of God, who is equal in power and glory with the Son.

1. The comforter promised is *the Spirit*; one who should do his work in a spiritual way and manner, inwardly and invisibly, by working on men's spirits.

2. He is the *Spirit of truth*. He will be true to you and to his undertaking for you, which he will perform to the utmost. He will *teach you the truth*; will enlighten your minds with the knowledge of it, will strengthen and confirm your belief of it, and will increase your love to it. The Gentiles by their idolatries, and the Jews by their traditions, were led into gross errors and mistakes; but the Spirit of truth shall not only *lead you into all truth*, but others by your ministry. Christ is the truth, and he is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit that he was anointed with.

3. He is one whom *the world cannot receive*,—but *ye know him*. *Therefore he abideth with you.*

1. The disciples of Christ are here distinguished from the world, for they are chosen and called out of the world that lies in wickedness; they are the children and heirs of another world, not of this.

2. It is the misery of those that are invincibly devoted to the world, that they *cannot receive the Spirit of truth*. The *Spirit of the world and of God*, are spoken of as directly contrary the one to the other, 1 Cor. ii. 12. for where the spirit of the world has the ascendancy, the Spirit of God is excluded. Even the *princes of this world*, though as princes they had advantages of knowledge, yet as princes of this world they laboured under invincible prejudice, so that they knew not the *things of the Spirit of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 8.

3. Therefore men *cannot receive the Spirit of truth*, because they *see him not, neither know him*. The comforts of the Spirit are *foolishness to them*, as much as ever the cross of Christ was, and the great things of the gospel, like those of the law, counted as a strange thing. These are judgments far above out of their sight. Speak to the children of this world of the operations of the Spirit, and you are as a barbarian to them.

4. The best knowledge of the Spirit of truth, is that which is got by experience, *Ye know him, for he dwelleth with you*. Christ hath dwelt with them, and by their acquaintance with him, they could not but know the *Spirit of truth*. They had themselves been induced with the Spirit in some measure. What enabled them to leave all to follow Christ, and to continue with him in his temptations? What enabled them to preach the gospel, and work miracles, but the *Spirit dwelling in them*? The experiences of the saints are the explications of the promises; paradoxes to others are axioms to them.

5. They that have an experimental acquaintance with the Spirit, have a comfortable assurance of his countenance. *He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you*, for the blessed Spirit doth not use to shift his lodging. They that know him, know how to value him, invite him and bid him welcome, and therefore he shall be in them, as the light in the air, as the sap in the tree, as the soul in the body. The communion with him shall be intimate, and their union with him inseparable.

6. The gift of the Holy Ghost is a peculiar gift, bestowed upon the disciples of Christ in a distinguishing way: them, and not the world; it is to them hidden *manna*, and the *white stone*. No comforts comparable to those which make *no show*, make *no noise*. This is the favour God bears to his chosen; it is the *heritage of those that fear his name*.

18. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. 19. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more: but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. 20. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. 21. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. 22. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? 23. Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. 24. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

When friends are parting, it is a common request they make to each other, pray let us hear from you as often as you can; this Christ engaged to his disciples, that *out of sight* they should not be *out of mind*.

First, he promiseth that he would continue his care of them, ver. 18. *I will not leave you orphans or fatherless*, for though I leave you, yet I leave you this comfort, *I will come to you*. His departure from them was it that grieved them; but it was not so bad as they apprehended, for it was neither *total* nor *final*.

1. Not *total*; though I leave you without my bodily presence, yet I do not leave you without comfort. Though children, and left *little*, yet they had received the adoption of sons, and his Father would be their Father, with whom those who otherwise would be faithless, find mercy. Note, The case of true believers, though sometimes it may be *sorrowful*, yet it is never *comfortless*, because they are never orphans: for God is their Father, who is an *everlasting Father*.

2. Not *final*; *I will come to you*, *ερχομαι*, *I do come*; that is, 1. I will come speedily to you at my resurrection, I will not be long away, but will

be with you again in a little time. He had often said, *The third day I will rise again*. 2. I will be coming *daily* to you in my Spirit; in the tokens of his love, and visits of his grace, he is still coming. 3. I will come certainly at the end of time, surely I will come quickly to introduce you into the joy of your Lord. Note, The consideration of Christ's coming to us saves us from being comfortless in his removals from us; for if he departs *for a season*, it is that *we may receive him for ever*. Let this moderate our grief, *The Lord is at hand*.

Secondly, He promiseth that they should continue their acquaintance with him and interest in him, ver. 19, 20. *Yet a little while, and the world sees me no more*, i. e. now I am no more in the world; after his death, *the world saw him no more*, for though he rose to life, he never *showed himself to all the people*, Acts x. 28. The malignant world thought they had seen enough of him, and cried, *away with him, crucify him*; and so shall their doom be; they shall see him no more. Those only that see Christ with an eye of faith, shall see him for ever; the world sees him no more till his second coming; but his disciples have communion with him in his absence.

1. *Ye see me*, and shall continue to see me, *the world sees me no more*. They saw him with their bodily eyes after his resurrection, for he shewed himself to them by *many infallible proofs*, Acts i. 3. And then were the disciples glad when they *saw the Lord*. They saw him with an eye of faith after his ascension, sitting at God's right hand, as Lord of all; saw that in him which the world saw not.

2. *Because I live, ye shall live also*. That which grieved them was that their Master was dying, and they counted upon nothing else but to *die with him*. No, saith Christ, 1. *I live*, this the great God glories in, *I live*, saith the Lord, and Christ saith the same; not only *I shall live*, as he saith of them, but *I do live*; for he has life in himself, and *lives for evermore*. We are comfortless, while *we know that our Redeemer lives*. 2. Therefore *ye shall live also*. Note, The life of Christians is bound up in the life of Christ; as sure and as long as he lives, they that by faith are united to him shall live also; they shall live spiritually, as divine life in communion with God, this life is hid with Christ; if the head and root live, the members and branches live also. They shall *live eternally*; their bodies shall rise in the virtue of Christ's resurrection; it will be well with them in the world to come, it cannot but be well with all that are his, *Isa. xxvi. 19*.

3. *Ye shall have the assurance of this*, ver. 20. *At that day, when I am glorified, when the Spirit is poured out, ye shall know more clearly and certainly than you do now, that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you*.

1. These glorious mysteries will be fully known in heaven. *At that day, when I shall receive you to myself, you shall know perfectly that which now you see through a glass darkly*. Now it appears not what *we shall be*, but then it will appear what we were.

2. They were more fully known after the pouring out of the Spirit upon the apostles; or that day divine light should shine, and their eyes should see more clearly, their knowledge should greatly advance and increase then, would become more extensive and more distinct, and like the blind man's at the second touch of Christ's hand, who at first only *saw men as trees walking*.

3. They are known by all that receive the Spirit of truth to their abundant satisfaction, for in the knowledge of this is founded their fellowship with the Father *his son Jesus Christ*. They know, 1. That Christ is in the Father, is one with the Father, by their experience of what he has wrought *for them and in them*; they find what an admirable consent and harmony there is between Christianity and natural religion, and that is grafted into this, and so they know that Christ is in the Father. 2. That Christ is in them, experienced Christians know by the Spirit, that Christ abides in them, 1 John iii. 24. 3. That they are in Christ, for the relation is mutual, and equally near on both sides, Christ in them, and they in Christ, which speaks an intimate and inseparable union; in the virtue of which it is that because he *lives*, they *shall live also*. Note, 1. Union with Christ is the life of believers, and their relation to him, and to God through him, is their felicity. 2. The knowledge of this union is their unspeakable joy and satisfaction; they were now *in Christ*, and he *in them*, but he speaks of it as a further act of grace that they should know it, and have the comfort of it. An interest in Christ and the knowledge of it are sometimes separated.

Thirdly, He promiseth that he would love them, and manifest himself to them, ver. 21—24. Where observe,

1. Who they are whom Christ will look upon, and accept as lovers of him; those that *have his commandments, and keep them*. By this Christ shews that the kind things he here said to his disciples, were intended not for those only that were now his followers, but for all that should *believe in him through their word*. Here is,

(1.) The duty of those who claim the dignity of being disciples; having Christ's commandments we must keep them; as Christians in name and profession we have Christ's commandments, we have them sounding in our ears, written before our eyes, we have the knowledge of them; but this is not enough, would we approve ourselves Christians indeed, we must keep them. Having them in our heads, we must keep them in our hearts and lives.

(2.) The dignity of those that do the duty of disciples. They are looked upon by Christ to be such as *love him*. Not those that have the greatest wit, and know how to talk for him, or the greatest estate, to lay out for him, but those that *keep his commandments*. Note, The surest evidence of our love to Christ is obedience to the laws of Christ. Such is the love of a subject to his sovereign, a dutiful, respectful, and obedient love, a conformity to his will, and satisfaction in his wisdom.

2. What returns he will make to them for their love; rich returns; there is no love lost upon Christ.

1. They shall have the Father's love. *He that loved me, shall be loved of my Father*. We could not love God, if he did not first out of his good-will to us give us his grace to love him; but there is a love of complacency, promised to those that do love God, *Prov. viii. 17*. He loves them, and lets them know that he loves them, smiles upon them, and embraceth them. God so loves the Son, as to love all those that love him.

2. They shall have Christ's love. *And I will love him*, as God-man, as Mediator; God will love as a Father, and I will love him as a brother, an elder brother. The Creator will love him, and be the felicity of his being; the Redeemer will love him, and be the protector of his well-being. In the nature of God, nothing shines more bright than this, that *God is love*, And in the undertaking of Christ, nothing appears more glorious than this, that he *loved us*. Now both these loves are the crown and comfort, the *grace and glory* which shall be to all them that *love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*. Christ was now leaving his disciples, but promiseth to continue his love to them; for he not only retains a kindness for believers though *absent*, but is doing them kindness *whilst absent*, for he bears them on his heart, and ever lives interceding for them.

3. They shall have the comfort of that love. *I will manifest myself to him*. Some understand it of Christ's showing himself alive to his disciples after his resurrection, but it being promised to all that *love him, and keep his*

much with you: for the prince of the world cometh, and hath nothing in me. 31. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

Christ here gives his disciples another reason, why their hearts should not be troubled for his going away: and that is, because his heart was not. And here he tells them what it was that enabled him to endure the cross and despise the shame, that they might look unto him and run with patience. He comforted himself,

First, That though he went away, *he would come again; ye have heard how I have said, and now I say it again, I go away and come again.* Note, What we have heard of the doctrine of Christ, especially concerning his second coming, we have need to be told again and again. When we are under the power of any transport of passion, grief, or fear, or care, we forget that Christ will come again. See *Phil. iv. 5.* Christ encouraged himself with this in his sufferings and death; that he should *come again, and the same should comfort us in our departure at death; we go away, to come again;* the leave we take of our friends at parting, is only a good night, not a final farewell. See *1 Thess. iv. 13, 14.*

Secondly, That *he went to his Father.* If ye loved me, as by your sorrow you say you do, *ye would rejoice instead of mourning, because though I leave you, yet I said, I go unto the Father, not only mine, but your's, which will be my advancement and your advantage, for my Father is greater than I.* Observe here,

1. It is matter of joy to Christ's disciples that he is gone to the Father, to take possession for orphans, and make intercession for transgressors. His departure had a bright side as well as a dark side. Therefore he sent this message after his resurrection, *John xx. 17. I ascend to my Father and your Father, as most comfortable.*

2. The reason of this is, because *the Father is greater than he,* which if it be a proper proof of that for which it is alleged, as no doubt it is, must be understood thus, that his state with his Father would be much more excellent and glorious than his present state; his returning to his Father (so Dr. Hammond) would be the advancing of him to a much higher condition, than that which he was now in. Or thus, his going to the Father himself, and bringing all his followers to him there, was the ultimate end of his undertaking, and therefore greater than the means. Thus Christ raiseth the thoughts and expectations of his disciples to something greater than that, which now they thought all their happiness bound up in. The kingdom of the Father, wherein he shall be all in all, will be greater than the mediatorial kingdom.

3. The disciples of Christ should shew that they love him, by their rejoicing in the glories of his exaltation, rather than by lamenting the sorrows of his humiliation, and rejoicing that he is gone to his father, where he would be, and where he shall be shortly with him. Many that love Christ, let their love run out in a wrong channel; they think if they love him, they must be continually in pain because of him, whereas they that love him would dwell at ease in him, should rejoice in Christ Jesus.

Thirdly, That his going away, compared with the prophecies which went before of it, would be a means of confirming the faith of his disciples, *ver. 29. I have told you before it come to pass, that I must die and rise again, and ascend to the Father, and send the Comforter, that when it is come to pass ye might believe.* See this reason, *chap. xiii. 19.—xvi. 4.* Christ told his disciples of his death, though he knew it would both puzzle them and grieve them, because it would afterwards redound to the confirmation of their faith in two things.

1. That he who foretold those things had a divine prescience, and knew beforehand what a day would bring forth. When St. Paul was going to Jerusalem, he knew not the things that did abide him there, but Christ did.

2. That the things foretold were according to the divine purpose and designation, not sudden resolves, but the counterparts of an eternal counsel. Let them therefore not be troubled at that which would be for the confirmation of their faith, and so would redound to their real benefit; for the trial of our faith is very precious, though it cost us present heaviness through manifold temptations, *1 Pet. i. 6.*

Fourthly, that he was sure of a victory over Satan, with whom he knew he was to have a struggle in his departure, *ver. 30. Henceforth I will not talk much with you, having not much to say, but what may be adjourned to the pouring out of the Spirit.* He had a great deal of good talk with them after this, *chap. xv. and xvi.* but in comparison with what he had said, it was not much. His time was now short, and he therefore spoke largely to them now, because the opportunity will soon be over. Note, We should always endeavour to talk to the purpose because perhaps we may not have time to talk much. We know not how soon our breath will be stopt, and therefore should be always breathing something that is good. When we come to be sick and die perhaps we may not be capable of talking much to those about us, and therefore what good counsel we have to give them, let us give it while we are in health.

One reason why he would not talk much with them was, because he had now other work to apply himself to; *the prince of this world comes;* he called the devil the prince of this world, *chap. xii. 31.* The disciples dreamed of their Master being the Prince of this world, and the worldly princes under him. But Christ tells them, that the prince of this world was his enemy, and so were the princes of this world that were acted and ruled by him, *1 Cor. ii. 8.* But he was nothing in me. Observe here,

1. The prospect Christ had of an approaching conflict, not only with men but with the powers of darkness. The devil had set upon him with his temptations, *Mat. iv.* had offered him the kingdoms of the world, if he would hold them as tributary to him, with an eye to which, Christ calls him in disdain the prince of this world; then the devil departed from him for a season; but now, saith Christ, I see him rallying again, preparing to make a furious onset, and so to gain that by terrors which he could not gain by allurements: to frighten from his undertaking, when he could not intice him from it. Note, The foresight of a temptation gives us great advantage in our resistance of it; for being forewarned we should be forearmed: While we are here, we may see Satan continually coming against us, and ought therefore to be always upon our guard.

2. The assurance he had of good success in the conflict; *he had nothing in me, ex tunc scđo, he has nothing at all.* 1. There was no guilt in Christ to give authority to the prince of this world in his terrors: The devil is said to have the power of death, *Heb. ii. 14.* the Jews called him the angel of death, as an executioner: Now Christ having done no evil, he had no legal power against him, and therefore, though he prevailed to crucify him, he could not prevail to terrify him; though he hurried him to death, yet not to despair. When Satan comes to disquiet us, he has something in us to perplex us with, for we have all sinned; but when he would disturb Christ, he found no occasion against him. 2. There was no corruption in Christ to give advantage to the prince of this world in his temptations; he could

not crush his undertaking, by drawing him to sin, because there was nothing sinful in him, nothing irregular for his temptations to fasten upon, no tinder for him to strike fire into; such was the spotless purity of his nature, that he was above the possibility of sinning. The more Satan's interest in us is crushed and decays, the more comfortable may we expect suffering and death.

Fifthly, That his departure was in compliance with and obedience to his Father. Satan could not force his life from him, and yet he would die, that the world may know that I love the Father, *ver. 31.* We may take this,

1. As confirming what he had often said, that his undertaking as Mediator was a demonstration to the world, 1. Of his compliance with the Father; hereby it appears that he loved the Father. As it was an evidence of his love to man, that he died for his salvation; so it was of his love to God, that he died for his glory and the accomplishing of his purposes. Let the world know, that between the Father and the Son there is no love lost. As the Father loved the Son, and gave all things into his hands; so the Son loved the Father, and gave his Spirit into his hand. 2. Of his obedience to his Father: As the Father gave me commandment, even so, I did the thing commanded, in the manner commanded. Note, The best evidence of our love to the Father, is our doing as he hath given us commandment. As Christ loved the Father, and obeyed him, even to the death: so we must love Christ, and obey him. Christ's eye to the Father's commandment, obliging him to suffer and die, bore him up with cheerfulness, and overcame the reluctances of nature; this took off the offence of the cross, that what he did was by order from the Father; the command of God is sufficient to bear us out in that which is most disputed by others, and therefore should be sufficient to bear us up in that which is most difficult to ourselves: This is the will of him that made me, that sent me.

3. As concluding what he had now said, having brought it to this, here he leaves it, that the world may know that I love the Father, you shall see how cheerfully I can meet the appointed cross; Arise, let us go hence to the garden; so some; or to Jerusalem. When we talk of troubles at a distance, it is easy to say, Lord, I will follow you whithersoever thou go'st; but when it comes to the pinch, when an unavoidable cross lies in the way of duty, then to say, Arise, let us go meet it, instead of going out of our way to miss it, this lets the world know that we love the Father. If this discourse was at the close of the passover supper, it should seem that at these words he rose from the table, and retired into the withdrawing room, where he might the more freely carry on the discourse with his disciples in the following chapters, and pray with them. Dr. Goodwin's remark upon this is, that Christ mentioning the great motive of his sufferings, his Father's commandment, was in all haste to go forth to suffer and die, was afraid of slipping the time of Judas's meeting him: Arise, saith he, let us go hence; but he looks upon the glass, as it were, sees it not quite out, and therefore sits down again, and preaches another sermon.

Now, (1.) In these words he gives his disciples an encouragement to follow him: He doth not say, I must go; but, let us go. He calls them out to no hardships, but what he himself goes before them in as their leader. They had promised they would not desert him; Come, saith he, let us go then; let us see how you will make the words good.

(2.) He gives them an example, teaching them at all times, especially in suffering times, to sit loose to all things here below, and often to think and speak of leaving them. Though we sit easy, and in the midst of the delights of an agreeable conversation, yet we must not think of being here always; Arise, let us go hence. If it were at the close of the passover and encharistical supper, it teaches us, that the solemnities of our communion which God are not to be constant in this world. When we sit down under Christ's shadow with delight, and say, It is good to be here; yet we must think of rising and going hence; going down from the mount.

C H A P. XV.

It is generally agreed, that Christ's discourse in this and the next chapter, was at the close of his last supper, the night in which he was betrayed and it is a continued discourse, not interrupted as that in the foregoing chapter was; and what he chooseth to discourse of, is very pertinent to the present sad occasion of a farewell sermon; Now he was about to leave them, 1. They would be tempted to leave him, and return to Moses again; and therefore he tells them, how necessary it was that they should by faith adhere to him, and abide in him. 2. They would be tempted to grow strange one to another, and therefore he presseth it upon them to love one another, and to keep up that communion when he was gone, which had hitherto been their comfort. 3. They would be tempted to shrink from their apostleship, when they met with hardships, and therefore he prepares them to hear the shock of the world's ill-will. There are four words, to which his discourse in this chapter may be reduced: (1.) Fruit, *ver. 1—8.* (2.) Love, *ver. 9—17.* (3.) Hatred, *ver. 18—25.* (4.) The Comforter, *ver. 26, 27.*

1. I Am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. 4. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 6. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8. Herein is my father glorified, that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be my disciples.

Here Christ discourseth concerning the fruit, the fruit of the Spirit, which his disciples were to bring forth, under the similitude of a vine. Observe here,

First, The doctrine of this similitude; what notion we ought to have of it;

1. That Jesus Christ is the vine, the true vine. It is an instance of the humility

humility of Christ, that he is pleased to speak of himself under low and humble comparisons. He that is *the sun of righteousness*, and *the bright and morning star*, compares himself to a *vine*. The church, which is Christ mystical, is a *vine*, Psalm lxxx. 8. so is Christ, who is the Church seminal: Christ and his church are thus set forth,

(1.) He is *the vine*, planted as the vineyard, and not a spontaneous product; planted in the earth: for he is *the Word made flesh*. The vine has an unsightly, unpromising outside; and Christ had *no form nor comeliness*, Isa. liii. 2. The vine is a spreading plant, and Christ will be known *salvation to the ends of the earth*. The fruit of the vine honours God and cheers man, Judg. ix. 13. so doth the fruit of mediation; it is *better than gold*, Prov. viii. 19.

(2.) He is *the true vine*, as truth is opposed to pretence and counterfeit; he is really a fruitful plant, a plant of renown: He is not like that wild vine, which deceived those who gathered of it, 2 Kings iv. 39. but a *true vine*. Unfruitful trees are said to lie, Heb. iii. 13. but Christ is a vine that will not deceive. Whatever excellency there is in any creature, serviceable to man, it is but a shadow of that grace which is in Christ for his peoples' good: He is that *true vine* typified by Judah's vine, which enriched him with the blood of the grapes, Gen. xlix. 11. by Joseph's vine, the branches which run over the wall, Gen. xlix. 22. by Israel's vine, under which he *dwelt safely*, 1 Kings iv. 25.

3. That believers are branches of this vine, which supposeth that Christ is the root of the vine; the root is unseen; and our life is hid with Christ: the root bears the tree, Rom. xi. 18. diffuseth sap to it, and is all and all to its flourishing and fruitfulness; and in Christ is all supports and supplies. The branches of the vine are many, some on one side of the house or wall, others on the other side, yet, meeting in the root, are all but one vine; thus all good Christians, though in place and opinion distant from each other, yet meet in Christ, the center of their unity. Believers, like the branches of the vine, are weak, and insufficient to stand of themselves, but as they are borne up: See Ezek. xv. 2.

3. That the Father is the husbandman, *prunes*; the land-worker; though the earth is the Lord's, it yields him no fruit unless he works it: God has not only a propriety in, but a care of the vine and all the branches: He hath planted and watered, and gives the increase: for we are God's husbandry, 1 Cor. iii. 9. See Isa. v. 1, 2.—xxvii. 2, 3. He had an eye upon Christ the root, and upheld him, and made him to flourish out of a dry ground: He has an eye upon all the branches, and prunes them, and watches over them, that nothing hurt them. Never was any husbandman so wise, so watchful about his vineyard, as God is about his church! which therefore must needs prosper.

Secondly, The duty taught us by this similitude, which is to bring forth fruit, and in order to that to abide in Christ.

(1.) We must be fruitful. From a vine we look for grapes, Isa. v. 2. and from a Christian we look for Christianity, that is the fruit, a Christian temper and disposition, a Christian life and conversation, Christian devotions, and Christian designs. We must honour God, and do good, and exemplify the purity and power of the religion we profess; and this is bearing fruit. The disciples here must be fruitful, as Christians, in all the fruits of righteousness, and as apostles in diffusing the favour of that knowledge. To persuade them to this, he argueth,

1. The doom of the unfruitful, ver. 2. they are taken away. (1.) It is here intimated, that there are many who pass for branches in Christ, who yet do not bear fruit. Were they really united to Christ by faith, they would bear fruit; but being only tied to him by a thread of an outward profession, though they seem to be branches, yet will soon be seen to be dry ones; unfruitful professors are unsanctified professors: professors and no more. It might be read, Every branch that beareth not fruit in me, and it comes much to one; for that they do not bear fruit in Christ, and in his Spirit and grace, are as if they bore no fruit at all, Hos. x. 1. (2.) It is here threatened, that they shall be taken away, in justice to them and in kindness to the rest of the branches. From him that has not real union with Christ, and fruit produced thereby, shall be taken away even that which he seemed to have, Luke viii. 18. Some think this refers primarily to Judas.

2. The promise made to the fruitful; he purgeth them, that they may bring forth more fruit. Note, 1. Further fruitfulness is the blessed reward of former fruitfulness. The first blessing was, *Be fruitful*; and it is still a great blessing. 2. Even fruitful branches, in order to their further fruitfulness, have need of purging, or pruning; *pruning*, he taketh away that which is superfluous and luxurious, which hinders its growth and fruitfulness: The best have that in them which is peccant, *aliquid amputandum*; some notions, passions, or humours, that want to be purged away, which Christ has promised to do by his word, and Spirit, and providence; and these shall be taken off by degrees in the proper season. 3. The purging of fruitful branches, in order to their great fruitfulness, is the care and work of the great husbandman, for his own glory.

3. The benefit which believers have by the doctrine of Christ, the power of which they should labour to exemplify in a fruitful conversation, ver. 7. Now ye are clean.

(1.) Their society was clean, now Judas was expelled by that word of Christ, *What thou doest, do quickly*; and till they were got clear of him, they were not all clean. The word of Christ is a distinguishing word, and separates between the precious and the vile; it will purify the church of the first-born in the great dividing day.

(2.) They were each of them clean, i. e. sanctified by the truth of Christ, John xvii. 17. that faith by which they received the word of Christ purified their hearts, Acts xv. 9. The Spirit of grace by the word refined them from the dross of the world and the flesh; and purgeth out of them the leaven of the Scribes and Pharisees; from which, when they saw their inveterate rage and enmity against their Master, they were now pretty well cleansed. Apply it to all believers. The word of Christ is spoken to them; there is a cleansing virtue in that word, as it works grace, and works out corruption; it cleanseth as fire cleanseth the gold from its dross, and as physic cleanseth the body from its disease: And we then evidence that we are cleansed by the word, when we bring forth fruit unto holiness. Perhaps, here is an allusion to the law concerning vineyards in Canaan; the fruit of them was as unclean, and uncircumcised, and three first years after it was planted; and the fourth year it was to be holiness of prayers unto the Lord; and then it was clean, Lev. xix. 23, 24. The disciples had now been three years under Christ's instruction, and now ye are clean.

4. The glory that will redound to God by our faithfulness, with the comfort and honour that will come to ourselves by it, ver. 8. If we bear much fruit.

(1.) Herein our Father will be glorified. The fruitfulness of the apostles, as such, in the diligent discharge of their office, would be to the glory of God in the conversion of souls, and the offering of them up to him, Rom. xv. 9. The fruitfulness of all Christians, in a lower and narrower sphere, is to the glory of God. By the eminent good works of Christians, many are brought to glorify our Father which is in heaven.

(2.) So shall we be Christ's disciples indeed, approving ourselves so, and

making it to appear that we are really what we call ourselves: So shall we both evidence our discipleship and adorn it, and be to our Master for a name and a praise, and a glory; that is, disciples indeed, Jer. xviii. 11. So shall we be owned by our Master in the great day, and have the reward of disciples, a share in the joy of our Lord. And the more fruit we bring forth, the more we abound in that which is good, the more he is glorified.

(2.) In order to our fruitfulness we must abide in Christ, must keep up our union with him by faith, and do all we do in religion in the virtue of that union.

Here is, 1. The duty enjoined, ver. 4. *Abide in me and I in you*. Note, It is the great concern of all Christ's disciples constantly to keep up a dependence upon Christ, and communion with him; habitually to adhere to him, and actually to derive from him. Those that are come to Christ, must abide in him; abide in me, by faith; and I in you, by my Spirit: Abide in me, and then fear not but I will abide in you; for the communion between Christ and believers never fails on his side. We must abide in Christ's word by a regard to it, and it is in us as in a light to our feet: We must abide in Christ's merit as our righteousness and plea, and it is in us as our support and comfort. The knot of the branch abides in the vine, and the sap of the vine abides in the branch, and so there is a constant communion between them.

2. The necessity of our abiding in Christ, in order to our fruitfulness, ver. 4, 5. *Ye cannot bring forth fruit except ye abide in me*; but if ye do, ye bring forth much fruit; for, in short, without me, or separate from me, ye can do nothing. So necessary it is to our comfort and happiness that we be fruitful, that the best argument to engage us to abide in Christ is, that otherwise we cannot be fruitful.

(1.) Abiding in Christ is in order to our doing much good: He that is constant in the exercise of faith in Christ, and love to him, that lives upon his promises and is led by his Spirit, he bringeth forth much fruit, he is very serviceable to God's glory, and his own account in the great day. Note, Union with Christ is a noble principle, productive of all good: A life of faith in the Son of God is incomparably the most excellent life a man can live in this world; it is regular and even, pure and heavenly, it is useful and comfortable, and all that answers the end of life.

(2.) It is necessary to our doing any good: It is not only a means of cultivating and increasing what good there is already in us, but it is the root and spring of all good: Without me ye can do nothing: Not only no great thing, heal the sick, or raise the dead, but nothing. Note, We have as necessary and constant a dependence upon the grace of the Mediator for all the spiritual and divine life, as we have upon the providence of the Creator for all the actions of the natural life; for, as to both, it is in the divine power that we live, and more, and have our being. Abstracted from the merit of Christ we can do nothing towards our justification; and from the Spirit of Christ, nothing towards our sanctification. Without Christ we can do nothing aright, nothing that will be fruit pleasing to God, or profitable to ourselves, 2 Cor. iii. 5. We depend upon Christ, not only as the vine upon the wall, for support; but, as the branch on the root, for sap.

3. The fatal consequences of forsaking Christ, ver. 6. *If any man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch*. This is a description of the fearful state of hypocrites that are not in Christ; and of apostates that abide not in Christ.

1. They are cast forth as dry and withered branches, which are plucked off because they cumber the tree. It is just they should have no benefit by Christ, who think they have no need of him; and that they who reject him should be rejected by him; those that abide not in Christ shall be abandoned by him; they are left to themselves to fall into scandalous sin, and then are justly cast out of the communion of the faithful.

2. They are withered as a branch broken off from the tree. They that abide not in Christ, though they may flourish a while in a plausible, at least in a passable profession, yet in a little time they wither and come to nothing: Their parts and gifts wither, their zeal and devotion wither, their credit and reputation wither, their hopes and comforts wither, Job viii. 11, 12, 13. Note, They that bear no fruit, after a while will bear no leaves. How soon is that fig tree withered away which Christ has cursed!

3. Men gather them. Satan's agents and emissaries pick them up, and make an easy prey of them. They that fall off from Christ, presently fall in with sinners, and the sheep that wander from Christ's fold, the devil stands ready to seize them for his self. When the Spirit of the Lord was departed from Saul, an evil spirit possessed him.

4. They cast them into the fire, i. e. they are cast into the fire; and they who seduce them and draw them to sin, do in effect cast them there; for they make them children of hell. Fire is the fittest place for withered branches, for they are good for nothing else, Ezek. xv. 2.

5. They are burned, that follows of course; but it is here added very emphatically, and makes the threatening very terrible; they will not be consumed in a moment, like thorns under a pot, Eccl. vii. 6. but *will* be burning for ever in a fire which not only cannot be quenched, but will never spend itself. This comes of quitting Christ, this is the end of barren trees. Apostates are twice dead, Jude 12. and when it is said, they are cast into the fire and are burned, it speaks as if they were twice damned. Some apply men's gathering them, to the ministry of the angels in the great day, when they shall gather out of Christ's kingdom all things that offend, and shall bundle the tares for the fire.

4. The blessed privilege which they have that abide in Christ, ver. 7. *If my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will of my Father in my name, and it shall be done*.

See here, 1. How our union with Christ is maintained by the word: If ye abide in me, he had said before, and I in you; here he explains himself, and my words abide in you: for it is in the word that Christ is set before us, and offered to us, Rom. x. 6, 7, 8. It is in the word that we receive and embrace him; and so where the word of Christ dwells richly, there Christ dwells. If the word be our constant guide and monitor, if it be in us at home, then we abide in Christ, and he in us.

2. How our communion with Christ is maintained by prayer: Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you: And what can we desire more, than to have what we will for the asking? Note, They that abide in Christ as their hearts' delight, shall have through Christ, their hearts' desire. If we have Christ, we shall want nothing that is good for us. Two things are implied in this promise: 1. That if we abide in Christ, and his word in us, we will not ask any thing but what is proper to be done for us: The promise abiding in us, lie ready to be turned into prayers; and the prayers so regulated cannot but speed. 2. That if we abide in Christ and his word, we shall have such an interest in God's favour and Christ's mediation, that we shall have an answer of peace to all our prayers.

9. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love, 10. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love: even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his

his love. 11. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full. 12. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. 13. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. 15. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. 16. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye shall go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. 17. These things I command you, that ye love one another.

Christ, who is love itself, is here discoursing concerning love; a fourfold love.

First. Concerning the Father's love to him: And concerning this he here tells us.

1. That the Father did love him, *ver. 9. As the Father hath loved me. He loved him as mediator; This is my beloved Son: He was the Son of his love: He loved him, and gave all things into his hand; and yet so loved the world, as to deliver him up for us all. When Christ was entering upon his sufferings, he comforted himself with this, that his Father loved him. Those whom God loves as a Father, may despise the hatred of all the world.*

2. That he abode in his Father's love, *ver. 10. He continually loved his Father, and was beloved of him. Even then, when he was made sin and a curse for us; and it pleased the Lord to bruise him; yet he abode in his Father's love: See Psalm lxxxix. 33. Because he continued to love his Father, he went cheerfully through his sufferings, and therefore his Father continued to love him.*

3. That therefore he abode in his Father's love, because he kept his Father's law. *I have kept my Father's commandments, as mediator, and so abide in his love. Hereby he shewed that he continued to love his Father, that he went on, and went through with his undertaking, and therefore the Father continued to love him: His soul delighted in him, because he did not fail, nor was discouraged, Isa. xlii. 1—4. We have broken the law of creation, and thereby thrown ourselves out of the love of God; Christ satisfied for us by obeying the law of redemption, and so he abode in his love, and restored us to it.*

Secondly, Concerning his own love to his disciples: Though he leave them, he loves them: And observe here,

1. The pattern of this love: *As the Father hath loved me so have I loved you. A strange expression of the condescending grace of Christ! As the Father loved him, who was most worthy; he loved them, who were most unworthy. The Father loved him as his Son, and he loved them as his children. The Father gave all things into his hand, so, with himself, he freely giveth us all things. The Father loved him as a mediator, as head of the church, and great trustee of divine grace and favour, which he had not for himself only, but for the benefit of those for whom he was intrusted; and faith he I have been a faithful trustee; As the Father has committed his love to me, so I transmit it to you: Therefore the Father was well pleased with him, that he might be well pleased with us in him; and loved him, that in him, as beloved, he might make us accepted, Eph. i. 6.*

2. The proofs and products of this love, which are four:

(1.) Christ loved his disciples, for he laid down his life for them, *ver. 13. Greater proof of love hath no man to shew than this, to lay down his life for his friend. And this is the love wherewith Christ hath loved us, he is our ransom, bail or s, body for body, life for life, though he knew not our insolvency and foresaw how dear the engagement would cost him. Observe here,*

1. The extent of the love of the children of men to one another, the highest proof of it is, laying down one's life for a friend to save his life, and perhaps there have been some such heroic achievements of love, more than plucking out one's own eyes, Gal. iv. 15. *If all that a man has he will give for his life, he that gives that for his friend gives all, and can give no more; this may sometimes be our duty, 1 John iii. 16. Paul was ambitious of the honour, Phil. ii. 17. and for a good man some will even dare to die, Rom. v. 7. It is love in the highest degree, which is strong as death.*

2. The excellency of the love of Christ beyond all other love; he has not only equalled, but exceeded the most illustrious lovers. Others have laid down their lives, content that they should be taken from them, but Christ gave up his; was not merely passive, but made it his own act and deed. The life which others have laid down, has been but of equal value with the life for which it was laid down, and perhaps less valuable; but Christ is infinitely more worth than ten thousand of us. Others have thus laid down their lives for their friends, but Christ laid down his for us when we were enemies, Rom. v. 8. *Plusquam ferrea aut lapidea corda esse oportet, quæ non emolliet tam incomparabilis divini amoris suavitas. Calvin.*

3. Christ loved his disciples, for he took them into a covenant of friendship with himself, *ver. 14. 15. If ye approve yourselves, by your obedience my disciples indeed, ye are my friends, and shall be treated as friends. Note, the followers of Christ are the friends of Christ, and he is graciously pleased to call and count them so: They that do the duty of his servants are admitted and advanced to the dignity of his friends. David had one servant in his court, and Solomon one in his, that was, in a particular manner, the king's friend, 2 Sam. xv. 37. 1 Kings iv. 5. but this honour have all Christ's servants. We may in some particular instances befriend a stranger; but we espouse all the interests of a friend, and concern ourselves in all his cures; thus Christ takes believers to be his friends, he visits them, and converseth with them, as his friends; bears with them, and makes the best of them; is afflicted in their afflictions, and takes pleasures in their interests there. Have friends but one soul? He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17. Though they often shew themselves unfriendly, he is a friend that loves at all times.*

Observe how endearingly this is expressed here! 1. He will not call them servants, though they call him Master and Lord. They that would be like Christ in humility, must not take a pride in insisting upon all occasions on their authority and superiority, but remember that their servants are their fellow-servants. But 2. He will call them his friends; he will not only love them, but will let them know it; for in his tongue is the law of kindness. After his resurrection he seems to speak with more affectionate tenderness of and to his disciples than before: *Go to my brethren, John xx. 17. Children, have you meat? John xxi. 5. But observe, though Christ*

called them his friends, they called themselves his servants; Peter, a servant of Christ, 1 Pet. i. 1. and so James, chap. i. 1. The more honour Christ puts upon us, the more honour we should study to do him; the higher in his eyes, the lower in our own.

(3.) Christ loved his disciples, for he was very free in communicating his mind to them, *ver. 15. Henceforth you shall not be kept so much in the dark as you have been, like servants, that are only told their present work: but when the Spirit is poured out, you shall know your Master's designs as friends. All things that I have heard of my Father I have declared unto you. As to the secret will of God, there are many things which we must be content not to know; but as to the revealed will of God, Jesus Christ has faithfully handed to us what he received of the Father, John i. 18. Matt. xi. 37. The great things relating to man's redemption, Christ declared to his disciples, that they might declare them to others; they were the men of his counsel, Matt. xiii. 11.*

(4.) Christ loved his disciples, for he chose and ordained them to be the prime instruments of his glory and honour in the world, *ver. 16. I have chosen you, and ordained you. His love to them appeared,*

1. In their election, their election to the apostleship, *John vi. 70. I have chosen you twelve. It did not begin on their side, You have not chosen me, but I first chose you. Why were they admitted to such an intimacy with him, employed in such an embassy for him, and endued with such power from on high? It was not owing to their wisdom and goodness in choosing him for their Master, but to his favour and grace in choosing them for his disciples. It is fit Christ should have the choosing of his own ministers; still he doth it by his providence and Spirit: Though ministers make that holy calling their own choice, Christ's choice is prior to theirs, and directs and determines it. Of all that are chosen to grace and glory, it may be said, they have not chosen Christ, but he has chosen them. Deut. vii. 7, 8.*

2. In their ordination. *I have ordained you, ἱκανὰ υἱας, I have put you into the ministry, 1 Tim. i. 12. put you into commission. By this it appeared he took them for his friends, that he crowned their heads with such an honour, and filled their hands with such a trust. It was a mighty confidence he reposed in them, when he made them his ambassadors to negotiate the affairs of his kingdom in this lower world, and the prime ministers of state in the administration of it.*

The treasure of the gospel was committed to them,

(1.) That it might be propagated; that you should go, *ἐν ὑμῶν ἐπαγγελίᾳ*, that you should go as under a yoke or burden, for the ministry is a work, and you that go about it must resolve to undergo a great deal. *That you may go from place to place all the world over, and bring forth fruit. They were ordained not to sit still, but to go about, to be diligent in their work; and to lay out themselves unweariedly in doing good. They were ordained not to beat the air, but to be instrumental in God's hand for the bringing of nations into obedience to Christ, Rom. i. 13. Note, Those whom Christ ordains, should and shall be fruitful; should labour, and should not labour in vain.*

(2.) That it might be perpetuated; that the fruits should remain, i. e. that the good effect of their labours may continue in the world from generation to generation, to the end of time. The church of Christ was not to be a short-lived thing, as many of the sects of the philosophers, that were a nine days wonder; it did not come up in a night, nor should it perish in a night, but be as the days of heaven. The sermons and writings of the apostles are transmitted down to us, and we at this day are built upon the foundation, ever since the Christian church was first founded by the ministry of the apostles and seventy disciples; as one generation of ministers and Christians has passed away, still another has come. By virtue of that great charter, *Matt. xxviii. 19. Christ has a church in the world, which, as our lawyers say of bodies corporate, doth not die, but lives in a succession; and thus their fruits remain to this day, and shall do while the earth remains.*

Lastly, His love to them appeared in the interest they had at the throne of grace; *whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he will give it you. Probably this refers in the first place to the power of working miracles, which the apostles were clothed with, which was to be drawn out by prayer. Whatever gifts are necessary to the furtherance of your labours, whatever help from heaven you have occasion for at any time, it is but ask and have. Three things are here hinted to us for our encouragement in prayer, and very encouraging they are. 1. That we have a God to go to, who is a Father; Christ here calls him the Father, both mine and your's; and the Spirit in the word and in the heart teacheth us to cry, Abba, Father. 2. That we come in a good name. Whatever errand we come upon to the throne of grace, according to God's will, we may with an humble boldness mention Christ's name in it, and plead that we are related to him, and he is concerned for us. 3. That an answer of peace is promised to us. What you come for shall be given you. The great promise made to that great duty, keeps up a comfortable and gainful intercourse between heaven and earth.*

Thirdly, Concerning the disciples' love to Christ, enjoined in consideration of the great love wherewith he hath loved them. Three things he exhorts them to.

1. To continue in his love, *ver. 9. continue in your love to me, and in mine to you. Both may be taken in. We must place our happiness in the continuance of Christ's love to us, and make it our business to give continued proofs of our love to Christ, that nothing may tempt us to withdraw from him, or provoke him to withdraw from us. Note, All that love Christ should continue in their love to him, that is, be always loving him, and take all occasions to shew it; and love him to the end. The disciples were to go out upon service for Christ, in which they would meet with many troubles; but faith Christ, continue in my love. Keep up your love to me, and then all the troubles you meet with will be easy; love made seven years' hard service easy to Jacob. Let not the troubles you meet with for Christ's sake quench your love to Christ, but quicken it rather.*

2. To let his joy remain in them, and fill them, *ver. 11. This he designed in those precepts and promises given them.*

(1.) That his joy might remain in them. The words are so placed in the original, as that they may be read either,

1. That my joy in you may remain. If they bring forth much fruit and continue in his love, he will continue to rejoice in them as he had done. Note, Fruitful and faithful disciples are the joy of the Lord Jesus; he rests in his love to them, *Zeph. iii. 17. As there is a transport of joy in heaven in the conversion of sinners, so there is a remaining joy in the perseverance of saints.*

2. Or that my joy, i. e. your joy in me may remain. It is the will of Christ that his disciples should constantly and continually rejoice in him, *Phil. iv. 4. The joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment, but the joy of those who abide in Christ's love is a continual feast. The word of the Lord enduring for ever, the joys that flow from it, and are founded on it, do so too.*

(2.) That their joy might be full. Not only that you might be full of joy, but that your joy in me and my love may rise higher and higher, till come to perfection, when you enter into the joy of your Lord. Note, 1. They and they only that have Christ's joy remaining in them, have their

full: worldly joys are empty, soon surfeit but never satisfy, it is only wisdom's joy that will fill the soul; *Psal. xxxvi. 8.* 2. The design of Christ in his word is to *fill the joy* of his people: see *1 John i. 4.* This and the other he hath said, that our joy might be fuller and fuller, and perfect at last.

3. To evidence their love to him, by *keeping his commandments*, ver. 10. *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love.* That will be an evidence of the fidelity and constancy of your love to me, and then you may be sure of the continuance of my love to you. Observe here, 1. The promise, ye shall *abide in my love*, as in a *dwelling place at home* in Christ's love; as in a *resting place*, at ease in Christ's love; as in a *strong-hold*, safe in it; You shall *abide in my love*, i. e. you shall have grace and strength to persevere in loving me. If the same hand that first shed abroad the love of Christ in our hearts did not keep us in that love, we should not along abide in it, but, through the love of the world should go out of love with Christ himself. 2. The condition of the promise; *If ye keep my commandments*; the disciples were to keep Christ's commandments, not only by a constant conformity to them themselves, but by a faithful delivery of them to others; they were to keep them as trustees, in whose hands that great depositum was lodged, for they were to *teach all things that Christ had commanded*, *Matt. xxviii. 20.* This commandment they must keep without spot, *1 Tim. vi. 14.* and thus they must shew that they *abide in his love*.

To induce them to keep his commandments, he urgeth,

(1.) His own example; *as I have kept my Father's commandments*, and *abide in his love*. Christ submitted to the law of mediation, and so preserved the honour and comfort of it, to teach us to submit to the laws of the Mediator, for we cannot otherwise preserve the honour and comfort of our relation to him.

(2.) The necessity of it to their interest in him, ver. 14. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you*, and not otherwise. Note, 1. Those only will be accounted Christ's faithful friends, that approve themselves his obedient servants; for they that will not have him to reign over them, shall be treated as his enemies; *idem velle & idem nolle eadem vera est amicitia*. *Salust.* 2. It is universal obedience to Christ, that is the only acceptable obedience; to obey him in every thing that he commands us, not excepting, much less excepting against any command.

Fourthly, Concerning the *disciples love one to another*, enjoined as an evidence of their love to Christ, and a grateful return for his love to them. We must keep his commandments, and this is his commandment, that we *love one another*, ver. 12. and again, ver. 17. No one duty of religion is more frequently inculcated, or more pathetically urged upon us by our Lord Jesus, than that of *mutual love*, and for good reason.

1. It is here recommended by Christ's pattern, ver. 12. *As I have loved you*. Christ's love to us should direct and engage our love to each other; in that manner, and from that motive, we should love another, as and because Christ has loved us. He here instances in some of the expressions of his love to them; he called them friends, communicated his mind to them, was ready to give them what they asked, *Go ye and do likewise*.

2. It is required by his precept. He interposeth his authority, has made it one of the statute laws of his kingdom. Observe, how differently it is expressed in these two verses, and both very emphatical.

1. *This is my commandment*, ver. 12. as if this were the most necessary of all the commandments. As under the law the prohibition of idolatry was the commandment more insisted on than any other, foreseeing the people's addictions to that sin; so Christ foreseeing the addictions of the Christian church to uncharitableness, has laid most stress upon this precept.

2. *These things I command you*, ver. 17. He speaks as if he were about to give them many things in charge, and yet names this only, *that ye love one another*; not only because this includes many duties, but because it will have a good influence upon all.

18. ¶ If the world hate you ye know that it hated me before it hated you. 19. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. 20. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep your's also. 21. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. 22. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. 23. He that hateth me hateth my father also. 24. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. 25. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

Here Christ discourseth concerning *hatred*, which is the character and genius of the devil's kingdom, as love is of the kingdom of Christ. Observe here,

1. Who they are in whom this hatred is found, in the world; the children of this world, as distinguished from the children of God; that are in the interests of the god of this world, whose image they bear, and whose power they are subject to. All those, whether Jews or Gentiles, that would not come into the Church of Christ, which he audibly called, and visibly separates from this evil world. The calling of these *the world* speaks, 1. Their number; there were a world of people that opposed Christ and Christianity. Lord, how were they increased that troubled the Son of David; I fear if we should put it to the vote, between Christ and Satan, Satan would out-vote us quite. 2. It speaks their confederacy and combination, these numerous hosts are embodied, and are as one, *Psal. lxxxiii. 7.* Jews and Gentiles that could agree in nothing else, agreed to persecute Christ's ministers. 3. It speaks their spirit and disposition; they are *men of the world*, *Psal. xvii. 13, 14.* wholly devoted to this world, and the things of it, and never thinking of another world. The people of God, though they are taught to hate the sins of sinners, yet not their persons, but to love and do good to all men. A malicious, spiteful, envious spirit, is not the spirit of Christ, but of the world.

2. Who they are against whom this hatred is levelled; against the disciples of Christ, against Christ himself and against the Father.

First, the world hates the *disciples of Christ*. The world *hateth you*, ver. 19. and he speaks of it as that which they must expect and count upon, ver. Vol. III. No. CXCI.

18. as *1 John iii. 13.* Observe how this comes in here, 1. Christ had expressed the great kindness he had for them as friends, but lest they should be puffed up with this, there was given them, as there was to Paul, a *thorn in the flesh*, that is, as it is explained there, reproaches and persecutions for Christ's sake, *2 Cor. xii. 7—10.* 2. He had appointed them their work, but tells them what hardships they should meet with in it, that it might not be a surprise to them, and that they might prepare accordingly. 3. He had charged them to *love one another*, and need enough they had to love one another, for the world would hate them; to be kind to one another, for they would have a great deal of unkindness and ill-will from those that were without. Keep peace among yourselves, and that will fortify you against the world's quarrels with you. They that are in the midst of enemies are concerned to hold together. See,

1. The world's enmity against the followers of Christ; it *hateth them*. Note, Whom Christ blesteth the world curseth. The favourites and heirs of heaven have never been the darlings of this world, since the old enmity was put between the seed of the woman and of the serpent. Why did Cain hate Abel, but because his works were righteous? Esau hated Jacob, because of the blessing; Joseph's brethren hated him, because his father loved him; Saul hated David, because the Lord was with him; Ahab hated Micajah, because of his prophecies; such are the causeless causes of the world's hatred.

2. The fruits of that enmity. Two of which we have here, ver. 20. 1. They will persecute you, because they hate you, for hatred is a restless passion. It is the common lot of those who will live godly in Christ Jesus, to suffer persecution, *2 Tim. iii. 12.* Christ foresaw what ill-usage his ambassadors would meet with in the world, and yet for the sake of those few that by their ministry were to be called out of the world, he sent them forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. 2. Another fruit of their enmity is implied, that they would reject their doctrine; when Christ saith, *If they have kept my saying, they will keep yours*, he means they will keep yours, and regard yours no more than they have regarded and kept mine. Note, The preachers of the gospel cannot but take the despising of their message to be the greatest injury that can be done to themselves; as it was a great affront to Jeremiah, to say, *Let us not give heed to any of his words*, *Jer. xviii. 18.*

3. The causes of that enmity. The world will hate them,

1. Because they will not belong to it, ver. 19. *If you were of the world, of its spirits, and in its interests, if you were carnal and worldly, the world would love you* as its own, but because you are called out of the world, it *hates you*, and ever will. Note, 1. We are not to wonder, if those that are devoted to the world are cherished by it as its friends; most men *bless the covetous*, *Psal. x. 3—xlix. 18.* 2. Nor are we to wonder, if those that are delivered from the world are maligned by it as its enemies; when Israel is rescued out of Egypt, the Egyptians will pursue them. Observe, The reason why Christ's disciples are not of the world, is not because they have by their own wisdom and virtue distinguished themselves from the world, but because Christ have chosen them out of it to set them apart for himself; and this is the reason why the world *hates them*; for 1. The glory, which by virtue of this choice they are designed for, sets them above the world, and so makes them the objects of its envy. The saints shall judge the world, and the upright have dominion, and therefore they are hated. 2. The grace which by virtue of this choice they are endued with sets them against the world; they swim against the stream of the world, and are not conformed to it; they witness against it, and are not conformed to it. This would support them under all the calamities, which the world's hatred would bring upon them, that therefore they were hated, because they were the choice and chosen ones of the Lord Jesus, and were not of the world. Now, 1. This was no just cause for the world's hatred of them; if we do any thing to make ourselves hateful, we have reason to lament it, but if men hate us for that for which they should love and value us, we have reason to pity them, but no reason to perplex ourselves. Nay, 2. This was just cause for their own joy. He that is hated because he is rich and prospers, cares not who has the vexation of it, while he has the satisfaction of it; *Populus me sibilat, at mihi plaudo ipse domi*. *Timon in Ilor.* Much more may they hug themselves, whom the world hates, but Christ loves.

2. Another cause of the world's hating you will be, because you do belong to Christ, ver. 21. *for my name's sake*. Here is the core of the controversy; whatever is pretended, this is the ground of the quarrel; they hate Christ's disciples because they bear his name, and bear up his name in the world. Note, 1. It is the character of Christ's disciples that they stand up for his name. The name into which they were baptized, is that which they will live and die by. 2. It has commonly been the lot of those that appear for Christ's name to suffer for so doing; to suffer many things, and hard things, *all these things*. It is matter of comfort to the greatest sufferers, if they suffer for Christ's name's sake. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, *1 Pet. iv. 14.* happy indeed, considering not only the honour that is imprinted upon those sufferings, *Acts v. 41.* but the comfort that is infused into them; and especially the crown of glory which those sufferings lead to. If we suffer with Christ, and for Christ, we shall reign with him.

3. After all it is the world's ignorance that is the true cause of its enmity to the disciples of Christ, ver. 19. *Because they know not him that sent me*. 1. They know not God. If men had but a due acquaintance with the very first principals of natural religion, and did not know God, though they would not embrace Christianity, yet they could not hate and persecute it. Those that have no knowledge who eat up God's people, *Psal. xiv. 4.* 2. They know not Christ, as he that sent our Lord Jesus, and authorised him to be the great mediator of the peace. We do not rightly know God, if we do not know him in Christ, and they that persecute those whom he sends, make it to appear they know not that he was sent of God, See *1 Cor. ii. 8.* Secondly, the world hates Christ himself. And this is spoken of here for two ends.

1. To mitigate the trouble of his followers arising from the world's hatred, and to make it the less strange, and the less grievous, ver. 18. *Ye know that it hated me before you*, *apolo. upon.* We read it as signifying priority of time; he began in the bitter cup of suffering, and then left us to pledge him; but it may be read as speaking his superiority over them; ye know that it hated me, your first, i. e. your chief and captain, your leader and commander. 1. If Christ, who excelled in goodness and was perfectly innocent and universally beneficent, was hated, can we expect that any virtue of merit of ours should screen us from malice? 2. If our Master, the founder of our religion, met with so much opposition in the planting of it, his servants and followers can look for no other in propagation and professing it.

For this he refers them, ver. 20. to his own word, at their admission into discipleship, *remember the word that I said unto you*. It would help us to understand Christ's later sayings, to compare them with his former sayings. Nor would any thing contribute more to the making of us easy, than remembering the words of Christ, which will expound his providences. Now in this word there is,

1. A plain truth: *the servant is not greater than his Lord*. This he had said to them, *Matt. x. 24.* Christ is our Lord, and therefore we must diligently

lently attended all his motions, and patiently *acquiesce* in all his disposals, for the servant is *inferior* to his lord. The plainest truths are sometimes the strongest arguments for the hardest duties; Elihu answered a multitude of Job's murmurings, with this one self-evident truth, *that God is greater than man*; Job xxxiii. 12. So here is,

2. A proper inference drawn from it, *If they have persecuted me, as you have seen, and are likely to see much more, they will also persecute you*: you may expect it and count upon it: for, 1. You will do the same that I have done to provoke them, you will reprove them for their sins, and call them to repentance, and give them strict rules of holy living, which they will not bear. 2. You cannot do more than I have done to oblige them; after so great an instance, let none wonder if they *suffer ill for doing well*. He adds, *If they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also*; as there have been a few, and but a few, that have been wrought upon by my preaching, so there will be by yours a few, and but a few. Some give another sense of this, making *arguer*, to be put for *reprover*; if they have *lain in wait* for my sayings, with a design to ensnare me, they will in like manner lie in wait to intangle you in your talk.

3. It serves to aggravate the wickedness of this unbelieving world, and to discover its exceeding sinfulness; to hate and persecute the apostles was bad enough, but in them to hate and persecute Christ himself was much worse. The world is generally in an ill name in Scripture, and nothing can put it into a worse name than this, that it *hated Jesus Christ*. There is a world of people that are haters of Christ.

Two things he insists upon to aggravate the wickedness of those that hated them.

1. That there was the greatest reason imaginable why they should *love him*; men's good words and good works use to recommend them; now as to Christ,

(1.) His words were such as merited their love, *ver. 22. If I had not spoken unto them, to court their love, they had not had sin*, their opposition had not amounted to a hatred of me; their sin had been comparatively no sin. But now I have said so much to them to recommend myself to their best affection, they have no pretence, no excuse for their sin. Observe here,

1. The advantage which they have that enjoy the gospel; Christ in it *comes and speaks to them*; he spoke in person to the men of that generation, and is still speaking to us by our Bibles and ministers, and as one that has the most unquestionable authority over us, and affection for us. Every word of his is pure, carries with it a commanding majesty, and yet a condescending tenderness, able, one would think, to charm the deafest adder.

2. The excuse which they have that enjoy not the gospel: *If I had not spoken to them, if they had never heard of Christ and salvation by him, they had not had sin*. 1. Note this kind of sin. They had not been chargeable with a contempt of Christ, if he had not come and made a tender of his grace to them. As *sin is not imputed where there is no law*, so unbelief is not imputed where there is no gospel: and where it is imputed, it is thus far the only damning sin, that being a sin against the remedy, other sins would not damn, if the guilt of them were not bound on with this. 2. Not such a degree of sin. If they had not had the gospel among them, their other sins had not been so bad; for the times of ignorance God winked at, Luke xii. 47, 48.

3. The aggravated guilt which they lie under to whom Christ has *come and spoken in vain*, whom he has called and invited in vain, with whom he has reasoned and pleaded in vain; they *have no cloke for their sins*, they are altogether inexcusable, and in the judgment-day will be speechless, and will not have a word to say for themselves. Note, The clearer and fuller the discoveries are which are made us of the grace and truth of Jesus Christ, the more is said to us that is convincing and endearing, the greater is our sin if we do not *love him and believe in him*. The word of Christ strips sin of its cloke, that it may appear sin.

(2.) His works were such as merited their love, as well as his words, *ver. 24. If I had not done among them, in their country, and before their eyes, such works as no other man ever did, they had not had sin*; that unbelief and enmity had been excusable, and they might have had some colour to say, that his word was not to be credited, if not otherwise confirmed; but he produced satisfactory proofs of his divine mission, *works which no other man did*. Note, 1. As the Creator demonstrates his power and Godhead by his works, *Rom. i. 20.* so doth the Redeemer. His miracles, his mercies, works of wonder, and works of grace, prove him sent of God, and sent on a kind errand. 2. Christ's works were such as *no man ever did*. No common person that had not a commission from heaven, and God with him, could work miracles, *John iii. 2.* And no prophet ever wrought such miracles, so many, so illustrious; Moses and Elias wrought miracles as servants, by a derived power: but Christ, as a Son, by his own power. This was it that amazed the people, that with authority he commanded diseases and devils, *Mark i. 27.* they owned they never saw the like, *Mark ii. 17.* They were all good works, works of mercy; and this seems especially intended here, for he is upbraiding them with this, that they hated him. One that was so universally useful, more than ever any man was, one would think, should have been so universally beloved, and yet even he is hated. 3. The works of Christ enhance the guilt of sinners' infidelity and enmity to him, to the last degree of wickedness and absurdity. If they had only heard his words, and not seen his works; if we had only his sermons upon record, and not his miracles, unbelief might have proved want of proof; but now it has no excuse. Nay, the rejecting of Christ both by them and us, has in it the sin not only of obstinate unbelief, but of base ingratitude. They saw Christ to be most amiable and studious to do them a kindness, yet they hated him, and studied to do him mischief. And we see in this word that great love wherewith he loved us, and yet are not wrought upon by it.

2. That there was no reason at all why they should hate him. Some that at one time will say and do that which is recommending, yet at another time will say and do that which is provoking and disobliging; but our Lord Jesus not only did much to merit men's esteem and good-will, but never did any thing justly to incur their displeasure; this he pleads by quoting a scripture for it, *ver. 25. This comes to pass, this unreasonable hatred of me, and of my disciples for my sake, that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, (i.e. in the Old Testament, which is a law, and was received by them as a law,) they hated me without a cause*; this David speaks of himself as a type of Christ, *Psal. xxxv. 19.—lxix. 4.* Note, 1. They that hate Christ hate him without any just cause; enmity to Christ is unreasonable enmity. We think those deserve to be hated that are haughty and froward, but Christ is meek and lowly, compassionate and tender; those also that under colour of complaisance are malicious, envious, and revengeful; but Christ devoted himself to the service of those that used him, nay, and of those that abused them; toiled for others' ease, and impoverished himself to enrich us. Those we think *hateful* that are *hurtful* to kings and provinces, and disturbers of the public peace; but Christ on the contrary, was the greatest blessing imaginable to his country, and yet was hated. He testified indeed that *their work were evil*, with a design to make them good; but to hate him for that cause was to hate him without a

cause. 2. Herein the Scripture was fulfilled, and the antitype answered the type. Saul and his courtiers hated David without cause, for he had been servicable to him with his harp, and with his sword: Absalom and his party hated him, though to him he had been an indulgent father, and to them a great benefactor. Thus was the Son of David hated, and hunted the scripture, but God, in permitting it, had that in his eye; and it confirms our faith in Christ as the Messiah, that even this was foretold concerning him, and being foretold was accomplished in him: And we must not think it strange or hard, if it have a further accomplishment in us. We are apt to justify our complaints of injuries done us, with this, that they are causeless, whereas the more they are so, the more like they are to the sufferings of Christ, and may be the more easy borne.

Thirdly, In Christ the world hates God himself; this is twice said here, *ver. 23. He that hateth me, though he thinks his hatred goes no further, yet really he hates my Father also*. And again, *ver. 24. They have seen and hated both me and my Father*. Note, 1. There are those that hate God, notwithstanding the beauty of his nature, and the bounty of his providence; they are enraged at his justice, as the devils that believe it and tremble, are vexed at his dominion, and would gladly break his bands asunder. They who cannot bring themselves to deny that there is a God, and yet wish there were none, they see and hate him. 2. *Hatred of Christ* will be construed and adjudged *hatred of God*, for he is in his person his Father's express image, and in his office his great agent and ambassador. God will have all men to honour the Son as they honour the Father, and therefore what entertainment the Son has, that the Father has. Hence it is easy to infer, that those who are enemies to the Christian religion, however they may cry up natural religion, are really enemies to all religion. Deists are in effect atheists, and they that ridicule the light of the gospel would, if they could, extinguish even natural light, and shake off all obligations of conscience and the fear of God. Let an unbelieving malignant world know that their enmity to the gospel of Christ, will be looked upon in the great day as an enmity to the *blessed God himself*; and let all that suffer for righteousness' sake, according to the will of God, take comfort from this; if God himself be hated in them, and struck at through them, they need not be either ashamed of their cause, or afraid of the issue.

26. ¶ But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even the Spirit of truth*, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me. 27. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

Christ having spoken of the great opposition which his gospel was likely to meet with in the world, and the hardships that would be put upon the preachers of it, lest any should fear that they and it would be run down by that violent torrent, he here intimates to all those that were well-wishers to his cause and interest, what effectual provision was made for the supporting it, both by the principal testimony of the Spirit, *ver. 26.* and the subordinate testimony of the apostles, *ver. 27.* and testimonies are the proper supports of truth.

First, It is here promised that the blessed Spirit shall maintain the cause of Christ in the world, notwithstanding the opposition it should meet with. Christ, when he was reviled, *committed his injured cause* to his Father, and did not lose by his silence, for the Comforter came, pleaded it powerfully, and carried it triumphantly. *When the Comforter or Advocate is come, which proceedeth from the Father, and whom I will send to supply the want of my bodily presence, he shall testify of me against those that hate me without cause*.

We have more in this verse concerning the Holy Ghost than in any one verse beside in the Bible; and being baptized into his name, we are concerned to acquaint ourselves with him, as far as he is revealed.

1. Here is an account of him in his essence or substance rather. He is the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father. Here, 1. He is spoken of as a distinct person; not a quality or property, but a person under the proper name of a Spirit, and proper title of the Spirit of truth, a title fitly given him where he is brought in testifying. 2. As a divine person that proceedeth from the Father, by out-goings that were of old from everlasting. The spirit or breath of man, called the *breath of life*, proceedeth from the man and by it modified he delivers his mind, by it invigorated he sometimes exerts his strength to blow out what he would extinguish, and blow up what he would excite; thus the blessed Spirit is the emanation of divine light, and the energy of divine power. The rays of the sun, by which it dispeneth and diffuseth its light, heat, and influence, proceed from the sun, and yet are one with it. The Nicene Creed saith, the Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son, for he is called the Spirit of the Son, Gal. iv. 6. And the Son is here said to send him. The Greek church choose rather to say, from the Father by the Son.

2. In his mission. 1. He will come in a more plentiful effusion of his gifts, graces, and powers, than had ever yet been. Christ had been long the *expected one*, he that should come; now the blessed Spirit is so. 2. *I will send him to you from the Father*. He had said, chap. xiv. 16. *I will pray the Father, and he shall send you the Comforter*; that speaks the Spirit to be the fruit of the intercession, Christ makes within the veil; here he is, *I will send him*, that speaks him to be the fruit of his dominion within the veil. The spirit was sent, 1. By Christ as Mediator, now *ascended on high* to give gifts unto men, and all power being given to him. 2. From the Father. Not only from heaven, my Father's house; the Spirit was given in a sound from heaven, Acts ii. 2. but according to my Father's will and appointment, and with his concurring power and authority. 3. To the apostles, to instruct them in their preaching, enable them for working, and carry them through their sufferings. He was given to them and their successors, both in Christianity and in the ministry; to them and their seed, and their seed's seed, according to that promise, *Isa. lix. 21.*

3. In his office and operations; which are two. 1. One implied in the title given to him, he is the Comforter, or Advocate: an Advocate for Christ to maintain his cause against the world's infidelity, a Comforter to the saints against the world's hatred.

2. Another expressed, *he shall testify of me*. He is not only an advocate, but a witness for Jesus Christ; he is one of the three that *bear record in heaven*, and the first of the three that *bear witness on earth*, 1. John v. 7. He instructed the apostles, and enabled them to work miracles; he indited the scriptures which are the standing witnesses that *testify of Christ*, John v. 39. The power of the ministry is derived from the Spirit, for he qualifies ministers; and the power of Christianity too; for he sanctifies Christians, and in both testifies of Christ.

Secondly, It is here promised that the apostles also, by the Spirit's assistance, should have the honour of being Christ's witnesses, *ver. 27. And ye also*

also shall bear witness of me, being competent witnesses, for ye have been with me from the beginning of my ministry. Observe here,

1. That the apostles were appointed to be witnesses for Christ in the world. When he had said, the Spirit shall testify, he adds, and you also shall bear witness. Note, The Spirit's working is not to supersede, but to engage and encourage our's. Though the Spirit testify, ministers also must bear their testimony, and people attend to it: for the Spirit of grace witnesseth and worketh by the means of grace. The apostles were the first witnesses that were called in the famous trial between Christ and the prince of this world, which issued in the ejection of the intruder. This speaks, 1. The work cut out for them, they were to attest the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, concerning Christ, for the recovering of his just right, and the maintaining of his crown and dignity. Though Christ's disciples fled when they should have been witnesses for him upon his trials before the high priest and Pilate, yet after the Spirit was poured out upon them, they appeared courageous in vindication of the cause of Christ against the accusations it was loaded with. The truth of the Christian religion was to be proved very much by the evidence of matter of fact, especially Christ's resurrection, of which the apostles were in a particular manner chosen witnesses, Acts x. 41. and they bore their testimony accordingly, Acts iii. 15.—v. 32. Christ's ministers are his witnesses. 2. The honour put upon them hereby, that they should be workers together with God. The Spirit shall testify of me, and you also under the conduct of the Spirit, and in concurrence with the Spirit (who will preserve you from mistaking in that which you relate on your own knowledge, and will inform you of that which you cannot know but by revelation) shall bear witness. This might encourage them against the hatred and contempt of the world, that Christ had honoured them, and would own them.

2. That they were qualified to be so; Ye have been with me from the beginning. They not only heard his public sermons, but had constant private converse with him. He went about doing good, and while others saw his wonderful and merciful works that he did in their own town and country only, they that went about with him were witnesses of them all. They had likewise opportunities of observing the unspotted purity of his conversation, and could witness for him that they never saw in him, or heard from him any thing that had the least tincture of human frailty. Note, 1. We have great reason to receive the record which the apostles gave of Christ, for they did not speak by hearsay, but what they had the greatest assurance of imaginable, 2 Pet. i. 16. 1 John i. 1—3. 2. Those are best able to bear witness for Christ that have themselves been with him, by faith, hope, and love, and by living a life of communion with God in him. Ministers must first learn Christ, and then preach him. Those speak best of the things of God that speak experimentally. It is particularly a great advantage to have been acquainted with Christ from the beginning, to understand all things from the very first, Luke i. 3. To have been with him from the beginning of our days. An early acquaintance, and a constant converse with the gospel of Christ, will make a man like a good householder.

C H A P. XVI.

Among other glorious things God hath spoken of himself, that is one, I wound and I heal, Deut. xxxii. 39. Christ's discourse in this chapter, which continues and concludes his farewell sermon to his disciples, doth so. 1. Here are wounding words in the notice he gives them of the troubles that were before them, ver. 1—6. 2. Here are healing words in the comforts he administers to them for their support under those troubles, which are five. (1.) That he would send them the Comforter, ver. 7—15. (2.) That he would visit them again at his resurrection, ver. 16—22. (3.) That he would secure to them an answer of peace to their prayers, ver. 23—27. (4.) That he was now but returning to his Father, ver. 28—32. (5.) That whatever troubles they might meet with in this world, by virtue of his victory over it, they should be sure of peace in him, ver. 23.

1. THESE things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. 2. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. 3. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. 4. But these things have I told you that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. 5. But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? 6. But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

Christ dealt faithfully with his disciples when he sent them forth on his errands, for he told them the worst of it, that they might sit down and count the cost. He had bid them in the chapter before to expect the world's hatred; now here in these verses,

First, He gives them a reason why he alarmed them thus with the expectation of trouble: These things have I spoken unto you that ye should not be offended, or scandalized, ver. 1.

1. The disciples of Christ are apt to be offended at the cross; and the offence of the cross is a dangerous temptation even to good men, either to turn back from the ways of God, or turn aside out of them, or drive on heavily in them; to quit either their integrity or their comfort: It is not for nothing that a suffering time is called an hour of temptation.

2. Our Lord Jesus, by giving us notice of trouble, designed to take off the terror of it, that it might not be a surprise to us. Of all the adversaries of our peace in this world of troubles, none insult us more violently, nor put our troops more into disorder, than disappointment doth; but we can easily welcome a guest we expect, and being forewarned and forearmed. *Præmoniti, præmuniti.*

Secondly, He foretels particularly what they should suffer, ver. 3. They that have power to do it, shall put you out of their synagogues; and that is not the worst, they shall kill you. Ecce duo gladii, behold two swords drawn against the followers of the Lord Jesus.

1. The sword of ecclesiastical censure; this is drawn against them by the Jews, for they were the only pretenders to church power. They shall cast you out of their synagogues, ἀποσυναγώγουσιν ὑμᾶς, they shall make you excommunicates. 1. They shall cast you out of the particular synagogues you were members of. At first they scourged them in their synagogues as contemners of the law, Matth. x. 17. and at length cast them out as incorri-

gible. 2. They shall cast you out of the congregation of Israel in general, the national church of the Jews; shall debar you from the privileges of that, put you into the condition of an out-law, *qui caput rerit lupinum*: they will look upon you as Samaritans, as heathen men and publicans. *Interdico tibi aqua & igne.* And were it not for the penalties, forfeitures, and incapacities incurred hereby, it would be no injury to be thus driven out of a house infected and falling. Note, It has often been the lot of Christ's disciples to be unjustly excommunicated. Many a good truth has been branded with an anathema, and many a child of God delivered to Satan.

2. The sword of civil power. The time cometh, the hour is come; now things are likely to be worse with you than hitherto they have been; when you are expelled as heretics, they will kill you and think they do God service, and others will think so too.

1. You will find them really cruel, they will kill you. Christ's sheep have been accounted as sheep for the slaughter; the twelve apostles (we are told) were all put to death except John. Christ had said, chap. xv. 27. ye shall bear witness, μαρτυρεῖτε, ye shall be martyrs, shall seal the truth with their blood, their heart's blood.

2. You will find them seemingly conscientious; they will think they do God service; they will seem λατρεύοντες προσφέρειν, to offer a good sacrifice to God; as those that cast out God's servants of old, and said, let the Lord be glorified, Isa. lxvi. 5. Note, 1. It is possible for those that are real enemies to God's service, to pretend a mighty zeal for it. The devil's work has many a time been done in God's livery, and one of the most mischievous enemies Christianity ever had, sits in the temple of God. Nay, 2. It is common to patronise an enmity to religion without a colour of duty to God; and service to his church. God's people have suffered the greatest hardships from conscientious persecutors; Paul verily thought he ought to do what he did against the name of Jesus: This doth not at all lessen the sin of the persecutors, for villainies will never be consecrated by intitling God to them, but it doth greaten the sufferings of the persecuted to die under the character of being enemies to God; but there will be a resurrection of names as well as of bodies at the great day.

Thirdly, He gives them the true reason of the world's enmity and rage against them, ver. 3. These things will they do unto you, not because you have done them any harm, but because they have not known the Father, or me. Let this comfort you, that none will be your enemies but the worst of men. Note, 1. Many that pretend to know God, are wretchedly ignorant of him. They that pretend to do him service, thought they knew him, but it was a wrong notion they had of him. Israel transgressed the covenant, and yet cried, my God we know thee, Hos. viii. 1, 2. 2. They that are ignorant of Christ, cannot have any right knowledge of God. In vain do men pretend to know God and religion, while they slight Christ and Christianity. Those are very ignorant indeed of God and Christ, that think it an acceptable piece of service to persecute good people. They that know Christ, know that he came not into the world to destroy men's lives, but to save them; that he rules by the power and truth of love, not of fire and sword. Never was such a persecuting church as that which makes ignorance the mother of devotion.

Fourthly, He tells them why he gave them notice of this now, and why not sooner.

1. Why he told them of it now, ver. 4. not to discourage them, or add to their present sorrow; nor did he tell them of their danger, that they might contrive how to avoid it, but that when the time shall come (and you may be sure it will come) you may remember that I told you. Note, When suffering times come it will be of use to us to remember what Christ has told us of sufferings. 1. That our belief of Christ's foresight and faithfulness may be confirmed; and, 2. That the trouble may be the less grievous, for we are told of it before, and we took up our profession in expectation of it, so that it ought not to be a surprise to us, nor looked upon as a wrong to us. As Christ in his suffering, so his followers in theirs, should have an eye at the fulfilling of the scripture.

2. Why he did not tell them of it sooner. I speak not this to you from the beginning, when you and I came to be first acquainted, because I was with you. 1. While he was with them he bore the shock of the world's malice, and stood in the front of the battle; against him the powers of darkness levelled all their force, not against small or great, but only against the King of Israel, and therefore he did not need then to say so much to them of suffering, because it did not fall much to their share; but we do find that from the beginning he bid them prepare for sufferings; and therefore, 2. It seems rather to be meant of the promise of another Comforter. This he had said little of to them at the beginning, because he was himself with them, to instruct, guide, and comfort them, and they needed not the promise of the Spirit's extraordinary presence. The children of the bride-chamber would not have so much need of a comforter till the bridegroom should be taken away.

Fifthly, He expresseth a very affectionate concern for the present sadness of his disciples, upon occasion of what he said to them, ver. 5, 6. Now I am to be no longer with you, but go my way to him that sent me, to repose there, after this fatigue, and none of you asketh me with any courage, whither goest thou? But instead of enquiring after that which would comfort you, you pore upon that which looks melancholy, and sorrow hath filled your heart.

1. He had told them that he was about to leave them; Now I go my way: He was not driven away by force, but voluntarily departed; his life was not extorted from him, but deposited by him: He went to him that sent him, to give an account of his negotiation. Thus when we depart out of this world, we go to him that sent us into it, which should make us all solicitous to live to good purposes, remembering we have a commission to execute, which must be returned at a certain day. 2. He had told them what hard things they must suffer when he was gone, and that they must not expect such an easy quiet life as they had had. Now, if these were the legacies he had to leave to them, who had left all for him, they would be tempted to think they had made a sorry bargain of it, and were, for the present, in a consternation about it, in which their Master sympathizeth with them, and blames them.

1. That they were careless of the means of comfort, and did not stir up themselves to speak it; none of you asks me, Whither goest thou? Peter had started that question, chap. xiii. 36. and Thomas had seconded it, chap. xiv. 5. but they did not pursue it, they did not take the answer, were in the dark concerning it, and did not enquire further, nor seek for fuller satisfaction, did not continue seeking, continue knocking. See what a compassionate teacher Christ is, and how condescending to the weak and ignorant! Many a teacher will not endure that the learned should ask the same question twice; if he cannot take a thing quickly, let him go without it; but our Lord Jesus knows how to deal with babes, that must be taught with precept upon precept. If the disciples here would have pushed on that enquiry, they would have found that his going away was for his advancement, and therefore his departure from them should not inordinately trouble them; for why should they be against his preferment? and for their advantage, and therefore their sufferings for him should not inordinately trouble them; for a sight of Jesus at the right hand of God, would be an effectual support to

to them as it was to Stephen. Note, A humble, believing enquiry into the design and tendency of the darkest dispensations of providence, would help to reconcile us to them, and to grieve the less, and fear the less, because of them; it will silence us to ask, Whence they come; but will abundantly satisfy us to ask, Whither they go? for we know they *work for good*, Rom. viii. 28.

2. That they were too intent, and pored too much upon the occasions of their grief: *Sorrow has filled their heart*. Christ had said enough to fill them with joy, chap. xv. 11. but by looking at that only which made against them, and overlooking that which made for them, they were so full of sorrow, that there was no room left for joy. Note, It is the common fault and folly of melancholy Christians, to dwell only upon the dark side of the cloud: to meditate nothing but terror, and turn a deaf ear to the voice of joy and gladness. That which filled the disciples' hearts with sorrow, and hindered the operations of the cordials Christ administered, was too great an affection to this present life: They were big with hopes of their Master's external kingdom and glory, and that they should shine and reign with him; and now, instead of that to hear of nothing but bonds and afflictions, this filled them with sorrow. Nothing is a greater prejudice to our joy in God, than *the love of the world*, and the sorrow of the world the consequence of it.

7. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9. Of sin, because they believe not on me, 10. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more: 11. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. 12. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself! but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shew it unto you.

As it was usual with the Old Testament prophets to comfort the church in its calamities with the promise of the Messiah, Isa. ix. 6. Micah v. 5. Zech. iii. 8. so the Messiah being come, the promise of the Spirit was the great cordial, and is still.

Three things we have here concerning the Comforter's coming:

First, That Christ's departure was absolutely necessary to the Comforter's coming, ver. 7. The disciples were so loth to believe this that Christ saw cause to assert it with a more than ordinary solemnity: *I tell you the truth*. We may be confident of the truth of every thing that Christ has told us, he hath no design to impose upon us. Now, to make them easy, he here tells them,

1. In general, *It was expedient for them that he should go away*. This was strange doctrine, but if it was true, it was comfortable enough, and shewed them how absurd their sorrow was. *It is expedient*, not only for me, but for you also, that I go away; though they do not see it, and are loth to believe it, so it is. Note, 1. Those things often seem grievous to us, that are really expedient for us; and particularly our going away when we have finished our course. 2. Our Lord Jesus is always for that which is most expedient for us, whether we think so or no: He deals not with us according to the folly of our own choices, but graciously over-rules them, and gives us the physic we are loth to take, because he knows it is good for us.

2. *It was therefore expedient*, because it was in order to the sending of the Spirit. Now observe,

(1.) That Christ going was in order to the Comforter's coming.

1. This is expressed negatively: *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come*. And why not? 1. So it was settled in the divine councils concerning this affair, and the measures must not be altered; *shall the earth be forsaken for them?* He that gives freely, may recal one gift before he bestows another; while we would fondly hold all. 2. It is congruous enough that the ambassador extraordinary should be recalled, before the envoy come that is constantly to reside. 3. The sending of the Spirit was to be the fruit of Christ's purchase, and that purchase was to be made by his death, which was his going away. 4. It was to be an answer to his intercession within the veil: See chap. xvi. 16. Thus must this gift be both paid for, and prayed for by our Lord Jesus, that we might learn to put the greater value upon it. 5. The greater argument the Spirit was to use in convincing the world, must be Christ's ascension into heaven, and his welcome there: See ver. 10. and chap. vii. 39. 6. The disciples must be weaned from his bodily presence, which they were too apt to doat upon, before they were duly prepared to receive the spiritual aids and comforts of a new dispensation.

2. It is expressed positively; *If I depart, I will send him to you*; q. d. trust me to provide effectually that you shall be no losers by my departure. The glorified Redeemer is not unmindful of his church on earth, nor will ever leave it without its necessary supports: Though he departs, he sends the Comforter: nay, he departs on purpose to send him. Thus still, though one generation of ministers and Christians departs, another is raised up in their room, for Christ will maintain his own cause.

(2.) That the presence of Christ's Spirit in his church is so much better and more desirable than his bodily presence, that it was really expedient for us he should go away, to send the Comforter. His corporeal presence could be but in one place at one time, but his Spirit is every where, in all places at all times: wherever two or three gathered in his name. Christ's bodily presence draws men's eyes, his Spirit draws their hearts, that was the letter which kills, his Spirit gives life.

Secondly, That the coming of the Spirit was absolutely necessary to the carrying on of Christ's interest on earth, ver. 8. *And when he is come, when he is sent*: he that is sent, is willing of himself to come, and at his first coming he will do this; he will reprove, or, as the margin reads it, he will convince the world, by your ministry concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment.

1. See here what the office of the Spirit is, and on what errand he is sent, 1. To reprove. The Spirit, by the word and conscience, is a reprove; ministers are reprovers by office, and by them the Spirit reproves. 2. To convince. It is a law term, and speaks the office of the judge in summing up the evidence, and setting a matter that has been long canvassed in a clear

and true light. He shall convince, i. e. he shall put to silence the adversaries of Christ and his cause, by discovering and demonstrating the falsehood and fallacy of that which they have maintained, and the truth and certainty of that which they have opposed. Note, Convincing work is the Spirit's work, he can do it effectually, and none but he; man may open the cause, but it is the Spirit only that can open the heart. The Spirit is called the Comforter, ver. 7. and here it is said, *he shall convince*; one would think that were cold comfort, but it is the method the Spirit takes, first to convince, and then to comfort; first to lay open the wound, and then apply healing medicines. Or taking conviction more generally, for a demonstration of what is right, it intimates, that the Spirit's comforts are solid, and grounded upon truth.

2. See who they are whom he is to reprove and convince: *the world*, both Jew and Gentile. 1. He shall give the world the most powerful means of conviction, for the apostles shall go into all the world, backed by the Spirit, to preach the gospel, fully proved. 2. He shall sufficiently provide for the taking off, and silencing of the objections and prejudices of the world against the gospel: Many an infidel was convinced of all, and judged of all, 1 Cor. xiv. 24. 3. He shall effectually and savingly convince many in the world, some in every age, in every place, in order to their conversion to the faith of Christ. Now this was an encouragement to the disciples, in reference to the difficulties they were likely to meet with. (1.) That they should see good done, Satan's kingdom *fall like lightning*, which would be their joy, as it was his. Even this malignant world the Spirit shall work upon, and the conviction of sinners is the comfort of faithful ministers. (2.) That this would be the fruit of their services and sufferings, these should contribute very much to this good work.

3. See what the Spirit shall convince the world of.

(1.) Of sin, ver. 9. *because they believe not on me*.

1. The Spirit is sent to convince sinners of sin, not barely to tell them of it, in conviction there is more than that, it is to prove it upon them, and force them to own it, as they, John viii. 9. that were convicted of their own consciences, make them to know their abominations. The Spirit convinceth of the fact of sin, that we have done so and so; of the fault of sin, that we have done ill in doing so; of the folly of sin, that we have acted against right reason, and our true interest; of the filth of sin, that by it we are become odious to God; of the fountain of sin, the corrupt nature; and lastly, of the fruit of sin, that the end thereof is death. The Spirit demonstrates the depravity and degeneracy of the whole world, that all the world is guilty before God.

2. The Spirit in conviction fastens especially upon the sin of unbelief, their not believing in Christ.

(1.) As the great reigning sin. There was, and is, in a world of people, that believe not in Jesus Christ, and they are not sensible that it is their sin; natural conscience tells them, that murder and theft are sins, but it is a supernatural work of the Spirit to convince them, that it is a sin to suspend their belief of the gospel, and to reject the salvation offered by it. Natural religion; after it has given us its best discoveries and directions, lays and leaves under this further obligation, that whatever divine revelation shall be made to us at any time, with sufficient evidence to prove it divine, we accept it and submit to it, which law they transgress, who when God speaketh to us by his Son, refuse him that speaketh; and therefore it is sin.

(2.) As the great ruining sin. Every sin is so in its own nature, no sin is so to them that believe in Christ; so that it is unbelief that damns sinners; it is because of that, that they cannot enter into rest, that they cannot escape the wrath of God; it is a sin against the remedy.

(3.) As that which is at the bottom of all sin; so Calvin takes it. The Spirit shall convince the world, that the true reason why sin reigns among them is, because they are not by faith united to Christ: *Ne putemus vel guttam unam rectitudinis sine Christo nobis inesse*. Calvin.

(1.) Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more, ver. 10. We may understand this,

1. Of Christ's personal righteousness. He shall convince the world, that Jesus of Nazareth was Christ the righteous, 1 John ii. 1. as the centurion owned, Luke xxiii. 47. Certainly this was a righteous man. His enemies put him under the worst of characters, and multitudes were not or would not be convinced but that he was an ill man, which strengthened their prejudices against his doctrine, but he is justified by the Spirit, 1 Tim. iii. 16. he is proved to be a righteous man, and not a deceiver; and then the point is in effect gained, for he is either the great Redeemer, or a great cheat; but a cheat we are sure he is not.

Now by what medium or argument will the Spirit convince men of the sincerity of our Lord Jesus? Why, 1. Their seeing him no more will contribute something towards the removal of their prejudices; they shall see him no more, in the likeness of sinful flesh, in the form of a servant, which made them slight him. Moses was more respected after his removal than before. But, 2. His going to the Father would be a full conviction of it. The coming of the Spirit, according to the promise, was a proof of Christ's exaltation to God's right hand, Acts ii. 36, 37. and that was a demonstration of his righteousness; for the holy God would never set a deceiver at his right hand.

2. Of Christ's righteousness, communicated to us for our justification and salvation; that everlasting righteousness, which Messiah was to bring in, Dan. ix. 24. Now,

(1.) The Spirit shall convince men of the righteousness; having by convictions of sin shewed them their need of a righteousness, lest that drive him to despair, he will shew them where it is to be had, and now they may, upon their believing, be acquitted from guilt and accepted as righteous in God's sight. It was hard to convince those of this righteousness, that went about to establish their own, Rom. x. 3. but the Spirit will do it.

(2.) Christ's ascension is the great argument proper to convince men of this righteousness: I go to the Father: and, as an evidence of my welcome with him, you shall see me no more. If Christ had left any part of his undertaking unfinished, he had been sent back again: but now we are sure he is at the right hand of God, we are sure of being justified through him.

(3.) Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged, ver. 10. Observe here,

1. The devil, the prince of this world, was judged: was discovered to be a great deceiver and destroyer; and as such, judgment was entered against him, and execution in part done: He was cast out of the Gentile world, when his oracles were silenced, and his altars deserted; cast out of the bodies of many in Christ's name, which miraculous power continued long in the church; he was cast out of the souls of people by the grace of God working with the gospel of Christ; he fell as lightning from heaven.

2. This is a good argument wherewith the Spirit convinceth the world of judgment, that is, 1. Of inherent holiness and sanctification, Matt. xii. 19. By the judgment of the prince of this world, it appears, that Christ is stronger than Satan, and can disarm and dispossess him, and set up his throne upon the ruins of his. 2. Of a new and better dispensation of things: He shall shew that Christ's errand into the world, was to set things to rights in it, and to introduce times of reformation and regeneration; and he proves it by this, that the prince of this world, the greater master of mis-rule, is judged

and expelled: All will be well when his power is broken, who made all the mischief. 3. Of the power and dominion of the Lord Jesus: He shall convince the world that judgment is committed to him, and that he is the Lord of all; which is evidently this, that he has judged the prince of this world, has broken the serpent's head, destroyed him that had the power of death, and spoiled principalities: if Satan be thus subdued by Christ, we may be sure no other power can stand before him. 4. Of the final day of judgment; all the obstinate enemies of Christ's gospel and kingdom shall certainly be reckoned with at last, for the devil, their ringleader, is judged.

Thirdly, That the coming of the Spirit would be of unspeakable advantage to the disciples themselves; the Spirit has work to do, not only on the enemies of Christ, to convince and humble them, but upon his servants and agents, to instruct and comfort them; and therefore it was expedient for them that he should go away.

1. He intimates to them the tender sense he had of their present weakness, ver. 12. *I have yet many things to say unto you, not which should have been said, but which he could and would have said, but ye cannot bear them now.* See what a teacher Christ is! (1.) None like him for copiousness; when he hath said much, he hath still many things more to say; *treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in him*; we are not straitened in him, if we be not straitened in ourselves. (2.) None like him for compassion; he would have told them more of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, particularly of the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, but they could not bear it, it would have confounded and stumbled them, rather than have given them any satisfaction. When, after his resurrection, they spoke to him of restoring the kingdom to Israel, he referred them to the coming of the Holy Ghost, by which they should receive power to bear those discoveries, which were so contrary to the notions they had received, that they could not bear them now.

2. He assures them of sufficient assistance, by the pouring out of the Spirit. They were now conscious to themselves of great dulness, and many mistakes, and what shall they do now their Master is leaving them; but when the Spirit of truth is come, you will be easy, and all will be well; well indeed; for he shall undertake to guide the apostles, and glorify Christ.

(1.) To guide the apostles; he will take care,

1. That they do not miss their way; *he will guide you*; as the camp of Israel was guided through the wilderness by the pillar of cloud and fire. The Spirit guided their tongues in speaking, and their pens in writing, to secure them from mistakes. The Spirit is given us to be our guide, Rom viii. 14. not only to shew us the way, but to go along with us, by his continued aids and influences.

2. That they do not come short of their end; *he will guide them into all truth*, as the skilful pilot guides the ship into the port it is bound for. To be led into a truth, is more than barely to know it; it is to be intimately and experimentally acquainted with it; to be piously and strongly affected with it; not only to have the notion of it in our heads, but the relish and favour, and power of it in our hearts, it notes a gradual discovery of truth shining more and more; shall lead you by those truths that are plain and easy, to those that are more difficult.

But how into all truth? The meaning is,

(1.) Into the whole truth relating to their embassy; whatever was needful or useful for them to know, in order to the due discharge of their office, they should be fully instructed in: What truths they were to teach others, the Spirit would teach them, would give them the understanding of, enable them both to explain and to defend.

(2.) Into nothing but the truth; all that he shall guide you into shall be truth, 1. John ii. 27. *the anointing is truth.*

In the following words he proves both these:

1. The Spirit shall teach nothing but the truth, for he shall not speak of himself any doctrine distinct from mine, but whatsoever he shall hear, and knows to be the mind of the Father, that and that only, shall he speak. This intimates, 1. That the testimony of the Spirit, in the word and by the apostles, is what we may rely upon: The Spirit knows and searches all things, even the deep things of God, and the apostles received that Spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11. so that we may venture our souls upon the Spirit's word. 2. That the testimony of the Spirit always concurs with the word of Christ, for he doth not speak of himself, has no separate interest or intention of his own, but, as in essence so in records, he is one with the Father and the Son, 1. John v. 7. Men's word and spirit often disagree, but the eternal Word and the eternal Spirit never do.

2. He shall teach you all truth, and keep back nothing that is profitable for you, for he will shew you things to come. The Spirit was in the apostles a Spirit of prophecy, it was foretold he should be so, Joel ii. 28. and he was so; the Spirit shewed them things to come, as Acts xi. 28—xx. 23.—xxi. 11. The Spirit spoke of the apostasy of the latter times, 1 Tim. iv. 1. John when he was in the Spirit, had things to come shewed him in vision. Now this was a great satisfaction to their own minds, and of use to them in their conduct, and was also a great confirmation of their mission. Junseuius has a pious note upon this: We should not grudge that the Spirit doth not now shew us things to come in this world, as he did to the apostles; let it suffice, that the Spirit in the world hath shewed us things to come in the other world, which are our chief concern.

(2.) The Spirit undertook to glorify Christ, ver. 14, 15.

1. Even the sending of the Spirit was the glorifying of Christ: God the Father glorified him in heaven, and the Spirit glorified him on earth. It was the honour of the Redeemer that the Spirit was both sent in his name, and sent on his errand, to carry on and perfect his undertaking. All the gift and graces of the Spirit, all the preaching, and all the writings of the apostles, under the influence of the Spirit, tongues, and miracles, were to glorify Christ.

2. The Spirit glorified Christ, by leading his followers into the truth as it is in Jesus, Eph. iv. 21. He assures them,

(1.) That the Spirit should communicate the things of Christ to them, *he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* As in essence he proceeded from the Son, so in influence and operation he derives from him. *He shall take of mine, of that which is mine.* All that the Spirit shews us, that is, applies to us, for our instruction and comfort, all he gives us for our strength and quickening, and all he secures and seals to us, did all belong to Christ, and was had and received from him: All was his, for he bought it, and paid dear for it, and therefore he had reason to call it his own; his, for he first received it; it was given him as the head of the church, to be derived from him to all his members. The Spirit came not to erect a new kingdom, but to advance and establish the same kingdom that Christ had erected, to maintain the same interest, and pursue the same design; those therefore who pretend to the Spirit, and yet vilify Christ, give themselves the lie, for he came to glorify Christ.

(2.) That herein the things of God should be communicated to us; lest any should think that the receiving of this would not make them much the richer, he adds, *all things that the Father has are mine.* As God, all that self-existent light and self-sufficient happiness, which the Father has, he has; as Mediator, all things are delivered to him of the Father, Matt. xi. 27. all

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that grace and truth which God designed to shew us, he lodged it in the hands of the Lord Jesus, Col. i. 10. Spiritual blessing in heavenly things are given by the Father to the Son for us, and the Son intrusts the Spirit to convey them to us. Some apply it to that which goes just before, *he shall shew you things to come*, and so it is explained by Rev. i. 1. *God gave it to Christ, and he signified it to John, who wrote what the Spirit said*, Rev. i. 1.

16. A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. 17. Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again a little while and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? 18. They said therefore, What is this that he saith? A little while? we cannot tell what he saith. 19. Now Jesus knew what they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me; and again a little while and ye shall see me: 20. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. 21. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. 22. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

Our Lord Jesus, for the comfort of his sorrowful disciples, here promiseth that he would visit them again.

First, Observe the intimation he gave them of this comfort he designed them, ver. 16. Here he tells them,

1. That they should now shortly lose the sight of him: *A little while, and ye shall not see me*, and still desire to see me, shall not see me; and therefore if they had any good question to ask him, they must ask quickly, for he was now taking his leave of them. Note, It is good to consider how near to a period our seasons of grace are, that we may be quickened to improve them while they are continued. Now our eyes see our teachers, see the days of the Son of man, but, perhaps, yet a little while, and we shall not see them. They lost the sight of Christ, 1. At his death, when he withdrew from this world, and never after shewed himself openly in it. The most that death doth to our Christian friends, is to take them out of our sight, not out of being, not out of bliss, not out of relation to us, only out of sight, and then not out of mind. 2. At his ascension, when he withdrew from them, who, after his resurrection, had for some time conversed with him, out of their sight, a cloud received him, and, though they looked up stedfastly after him, they saw him no more, Acts i. 9, 10. 2 Kings ii. 12. See 2 Cor. v. 16.

2. That yet they should speedily recover the sight of him: *Again a little while, and ye shall see me*, and therefore ye ought not to sorrow as those that had no hope; his farewell was not a final farewell, they should see him again, 1. At his resurrection, soon after his death, when he shewed himself alive, by many infallible proofs, and this in a very little while, not forty hours: See 1 Cor. vi. 2. 2. By the pouring out of the Spirit, soon after his ascension, which scattered the mists of ignorance and mistakes, they were almost lost in, and gave them a much clearer insight into the mysteries of Christ's gospel, than they had yet had: The Spirit's coming was Christ's visit to his disciples, not a transient but a permanent one, and such a visit as abundantly retrieved the sight of him. 3. At his second coming: They saw him again as they removed one by one to him at death, and they shall all see him together at the end of time, when he shall come in the clouds, and every eye shall see him. It might be truly said of this, it was but a little while, and they should see him; for what are the days of time, to the days of eternity? 2 Pet. iii. 8, 9.

The reason given is, *Because I go to the Father*, and therefore, 1. I must leave you for a time, because my business calls me to the upper world, and you must be content to wait me, for really my business is your's: 2. Therefore you shall see me again shortly, for the Father will not detain me to your prejudice: If I go upon your errand, you shall see me again, as soon as my business is done, as soon as is convenient. It should seem, all this refers rather to his going away at death, and return at his resurrection, than his going away at his ascension, and his return at the end of time; for it was his death that was their grief, not his ascension, Luke xxiv. 52. And betwixt his death and resurrection it was indeed a little while. And it may be read, not yet a little while, it is not *en paxor*, as it is John xii. 35. but *paxor*, for a little while ye shall not see me, namely, the three days of his lying in the grave; and again, for a little while ye shall see me, namely, the forty days between his resurrection and ascension. Thus we may say of our ministers and Christian friends, yet a little while and we shall not see them, either they must leave us, or we leave them, but it is certain we must part shortly, and yet not part for ever: It is but a good night to them, whom we hope to see with joy in the morning.

Secondly, The perplexity of the disciples upon the intimation given them, they were at a loss what to make of it, ver. 17, 18. Some of them said, softly, among themselves, either some of the weakest, that were least able, or some of the most inquisitive, that were most desirous to understand him, *What is this that he saith to us?* Though Christ had often spoken to this purpose before, yet still they were in the dark; though precept be upon precept, it is in vain, unless God give the understanding. Now see here,

(1.) The disciples' weakness, in that they could not understand so plain a saying which Christ had already given them a key to, having told them so often in plain terms that he should be killed, and the third day rise again; yet, say they, *We cannot tell what he saith*; for, 1. Sorrow had filled their hearts, and made them unapt to receive the impressions of comfort: The darkness of ignorance and the darkness of melancholy commonly increase and thicken one another; mistakes cause griefs, and then griefs confirm mistakes. 2. The notion of Christ's secular kingdom was so deeply rooted in them, that they could make no sense at all of those sayings of his, which they knew not how to reconcile with that notion. When we think the scripture must be made to agree with the false ideas we have imbibed, no wonder we complain of difficulty; but when our reasonings are captivated to revelation, the matter becomes easy. 3. It should seem that

which puzzled them was *the little while*: If he must go at last, yet they could not conceive how he should leave them quickly, when his stay hitherto had been so short, and so *little while*, comparatively. Thus it is hard for us to represent to ourselves that change as near, which yet we know will come certainly, and may come suddenly. When we are told, *yet a little while*, and we must go hence; yet *a little while*, and we must give up our account; we know not how to digest it; for we always took the vision to be *for a great while to come*, Ezek. xii. 27.

(2.) Their willingness to be instructed: When they were at a loss about the meaning of Christ's words, they conferred together upon it, and asked help of one another: By mutual converse about divine things, we both borrow others' light, and improve our own. Observe how exactly they repeat Christ's words. Though we cannot fully solve every difficulty we meet with in scripture, yet we must not therefore throw it by, but revolve what we cannot explain, and wait till God shall reveal even this unto us.

Thirdly, The further explication of what Christ had said.

1. See here why Christ explained it, *ver. 19*, because he *knew they were desirous to ask him*, and designed it. Note, The knots we cannot untie, we must bring to him who alone can give us understanding. Christ *knew they were desirous to ask him*, but were bashful and ashamed to ask. Note, Christ takes cognizance of pious desires, though they be not as yet offered up, the groanings that cannot be uttered, and even prevents them with the blessings of his goodness. Christ instructed those who he *knew were desirous to ask him*, though they did not ask: *Before we call he answers*.

Another reason why Christ explained it was, because he observed them canvassing this matter among themselves: *Do ye enquire this among yourselves?* Well, I make it easy to you. This intimates to us, who they are that Christ will teach: 1. The humble, that confess their ignorance, for so much their enquiry implied. 2. The diligent, that use the means they have: *Do ye enquire?* You shall be taught: *To him that hath, shall be given*.

2. See here how he explained it, not by a nice and critical descent upon the words, but by bringing the thing more closely to them; he had told them of *not seeing him*, and *seeing him*, and they did not apprehend that, and therefore he explains it by their sorrowing and rejoicing, because we commonly measure things according as they affect us, *ver. 20*. *Ye shall weep and lament*, for my departure, *but the world shall rejoice* in it; and *ye shall be sorrowful*, while I am absent, but, upon my return to you, *your sorrow will be turned into joy*: But he saith nothing of *the little while*, because he saw that perplexed them more than any thing; and it is no matter for knowing the times and the seasons. Note, Believers have joy or sorrow, according as they have or have not a sight of Christ, and the tokens of his presence with them.

What Christ saith here, and *ver. 21, 22*, of their sorrow and joy.

(1.) Is primarily to be understood of the present state and circumstances of the disciples, and so we have,

1. Their grief foretold: *Ye shall weep and lament, and ye shall be sorrowful*. The sufferings of Christ could not but be the sorrow of his disciples, they wept for him because they loved him; the pain of our friend is a pain to ourselves; when they slept it was for sorrow, *Luke xxii. 45*. They wept for themselves, and their own loss, and the sad apprehensions they had what would become of them when he was gone. It could not but be a grief to lose him for whom they left their all, and from whom they expected so much. Christ has given notice to his disciples before-hand to expect sorrow, that they may treasure up comforts accordingly.

2. The world's rejoicing at the same time;—*But the world shall rejoice*. That which is the grief of saints is the joy of sinners. (1.) That they are *strangers to Christ*, will continue in their carnal mirth, and not at all interest themselves in their sorrows: *It is nothing to them that pass by*, Lam. i. 12. Nay, (2.) They that are *enemies to Christ* will therefore rejoice, because they hope they have conquered him and ruined his interest. When the chief priests had Christ upon the cross, we may suppose they made merry over him, as they that dwell on earth over the *stain witnesses*, Rev. xi. 10. Let it be no surprise to us if we see others triumphing, when we are *trembling for the ark*.

3. The return of joy to them in due time; *But your sorrow shall be turned into joy*. As the joy of the hypocrite, so the sorrow of the true Christian, is but for a moment. The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. His resurrection was life from the dead to them, and their sorrow for Christ's sufferings was turned into a joy of such a nature as could not be damped and embittered by any sufferings of their own: They were *sorrowful*, and yet *always rejoicing*, 2 Cor. vi. 10. had sorrowful lives, and yet joyful hearts.

(2.) It is applicable to all the faithful followers of the Lamb, and describes the common case of Christians.

1. Their condition and disposition are both mournful, sorrows are their lot, and seriousness is their temper; they that are acquainted with Christ must, as he was, be *acquainted with grief*: They *weep and lament* for that which others make light of, their own sins, and the sins of those about them: They mourn with sufferers that mourn, and mourn for sinners that mourn not for themselves.

2. The world, at the same time, goes away with all the mirth; they laugh now, and spend their days so jovially, that one would think they neither knew sorrow nor feared it. Carnal mirth and pleasures are surely none of the best things, for then the worst men would not have so large a share of them, and the favourites of heaven be such strangers to them.

3. Spiritual mourning will shortly be turned into eternal rejoicing: *Gladness is sown for the upright in heart, that sow in tears, and without doubt they shall shortly reap in joy*: Their sorrow will not only be followed with joy, but turned into it; for the most precious comforts take rise from pious griefs.

This he illustrates by a similitude taken from a woman in travail, to whose sorrows he compares those of his disciples, for their encouragement; for it is the will of Christ that his people should be comforted people.

1. Here is the similitude or parable itself, *ver. 21*. A woman, we know when she is in travail, hath sorrow, she is in exquisite pain, because her hour is come, and the hour which nature and providence have fixed, which she hath expected, and cannot escape; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, provided she be safely delivered, and the child be, though a Jabez, (1 Chr. iii. 9.) yet not a Benoni, (Gen. xxxv. 18.) then she remembers no more the anguish, her groans and complaints are all over, and the after-pains are easier borne, for joy that a man is born into the world, answers, one of the human race, a child, be it son or daughter, for the word speaks either. Observe,

(1.) The fruit of the curse, in the sorrow and pain of a woman in travail, according to the sentence, *Gen. iii. 16*. In sorrow shalt thou bring forth. These pains are extreme, the greatest griefs and pains are compared to them. *Psal. xlviii. 6*. *Isa. xlii. 8—xxi. 3*. *Jer. iv. 31—vi. 24*, and they are inevitable, 1. *Thess. v. 3*. See what this world is, all its roses are surrounded with thorns; all the children of men are upon this account *foolish children*, that they are the hearings of her that bore them from the very first: This comes of sin.

(2.) The fruit of the blessing, in the joy that is for a child born into the

world. If God had not preserved the blessing in force after the fall, *Be fruitful and multiply*, parents could never have looked upon their children with any comfort; but what is the fruit of a blessing, is matter of joy; the birth of a living child is, 1. The parents joy, it makes them very glad, *Jer. xx. 15*. Though children are certain cares, uncertain comforts, and often prove the greatest crosses, yet it is natural to us to rejoice at their birth. Could we be sure that our children, like John, should be filled with the Holy Ghost, we might, indeed, like his parents, have joy and gladness in their birth, *Luke i. 14, 15*. But when we consider, not only that they are born in sin, but, as it is here expressed, they are born into the world, a world of snares, and a vale of tears, we shall see reason to rejoice with trembling, lest it should prove better for them they had never been born.

2. It is such joy as makes the anguish not to be remembered, or remembered as waters that pass away, *Job xi. 16*. *Hoc olim meminisse juvabit*, *Gen. xli. 51*. Now this is very proper to set forth, (1.) The sorrows of Christ's disciples in this world, they are like travelling pains, sure and sharp, but not to last long, and in order to a joyful produce; they are in pain to be delivered, as the church is described, *Rev. xii. 2*, and the whole creation, *Rom. viii. 22*. And, (2.) Their joys after their sorrows, which will wipe away all tears, for the former things are passed away, *Rev. xxi. 4*. When they are born into that blessed world, and reap the fruit of all their services and sorrows, the toil and anguish of this world will be no more remembered, as Christ's were not, when he saw of the travail of his soul, abundantly to his satisfaction, *Isa. liii. 11*.

2. The reddition of the similitude, *ver. 22*. *Ye now have sorrow*, and are likely to have more, but I will see you again, and you me, and then all will be well.

(1.) Here again he tells them of their sorrow; *Ye now therefore have sorrow*; therefore, because I am leaving you, as is intimated in the antithesis, *I will see you again*. Note, Christ's withdrawals are just cause of grief to his disciples: If he hide his face, they cannot but be troubled: When the sun sets, the sun-flower will hang the head: And Christ takes notice of those griefs, has a bottle for the tears, and a book for the sighs, of all gracious mourners.

(2.) He more largely than before assures them of a return of joy, *Psal. xxx. 5—11*. He himself went through his own griefs, and bare ours, for the joy that was set before him; and he would have us encourage ourselves with the same prospect. Three things recommended the joy:

1. The cause of it; *I will see you again*; I will make you a kind and friendly visit, to enquire after you, and minister comfort to you. Note, 1. Christ will graciously return to those that wait for him, though for a small moment he has seemed to forsake them, *Isa. liv. 7*. Men, when they are preferred, will scarce look upon their inferiors, but the exalted Jesus will visit his disciples: They shall not only see him in his glory, but he will see them in their meanness. 2. Christ's returns are returns of joy to all his disciples: When clouded evidences are cleared up, interrupted communion revived, then is the mouth filled with laughter.

2. The cordialness of it; *Your heart shall rejoice*. Divine consolations put gladness into the heart. Joy in the heart is solid, and not flashy; secret, and that which a stranger doth not intermeddle with: It is sweet, and gives a good man satisfaction in himself; it is sure, and not easily broken in upon. Christ's disciples should heartily rejoice in his returns, sincerely and greatly.

3. The continuance of it; *Your joy no man taketh from you*. Men will attempt to take their joy from them, they would if they could, but they shall not prevail. Some understood it of the eternal joy of them that are glorified; they that are entered into the joy of their Lord, shall go no more out: Our joys on earth we are liable to be robbed of by a thousand accidents, but heavenly joys are everlasting: But I rather understand it of the spiritual joys of those that are sanctified, particularly the apostles' joy, in their apostleship: *Thanks be to God, saith Paul, in the name of the rest, who always causeth us to triumph*, 2 Cor. ii. 14. A malicious world would have taken it from them; if bonds and punishments, tortures and deaths, would have taken it from them, they had lost it; but when they took every thing else from them, they could not take this; as *sorrowful, yet always rejoicing*: They could not rob them of their joy, because they could not separate them from the love of Christ, could not rob them of their God, nor of their treasure in heaven.

23. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing: Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. 24. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. 25. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. 26. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: 27. For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

An answer to their askings is here promised, for their further comfort. Now there are two ways of asking, asking by way of enquiry, that is the asking of the ignorant; and asking by way of request, and that is the asking of the indigent: Christ here speaks of both.

First, By way of enquiry, they should not need to ask, *ver. 23*. In that day ye shall ask me nothing; *ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ, οὐκ ἐρωτᾷτε με οὐδέν*, ye shall ask no question: you shall have such a clear knowledge of gospel mysteries, by the opening of your understandings, that you shall not need to enquire, as *Heb. viii. 11*. They shall not teach; you shall have more knowledge on a sudden, than hitherto you have had by diligent attendance: They had asked some ignorant questions, as *John ix. 2*. Some ambitious questions, as *Matt. xviii. 1*. Some doubtful ones, as *Matt. xix. 27*. Some impertinent ones, as *John xxi. 21*. Some curious ones, as *Acts i. 26*. but after the Spirit was poured out, nothing of all this. In the story of the Apostles' Acts we seldom find them asking questions, as David, *Shall I do this? Or, Shall I go thither?* For they were constantly under a divine conduct. In that weighty case of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, Peter went, *nothing doubting*, *Acts x. 20*. Asking questions supposeth us at a loss, or at least at a stand, and the best of us have need to ask questions; but we should aim at such a full assurance of understanding, as that we may not hesitate, but be constantly led in a plain path both of truth and duty.

Now for this he gives a reason, *ver. 25*, which plainly refers to this promise, that they should not need to ask questions: *These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs*, in such a way as you have thought not to plain and intelligible

intelligible as you could have wished, *but the time cometh, when I shall shew you plainly*, as plainly as you can desire, *of the Father*, so that you shall not need to ask questions.

1. The great thing Christ would lead them into, was the knowledge of God: *I will shew you the Father*, and bring you acquainted with him: This is that which Christ designs to give and which all true Christians desire to have. When Christ would speak the greatest favour intended for his disciples, he tells them he would *shew them plainly the Father*; for what is the happiness of heaven, but immediately, and everlastingly, to see God? *To know God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, is the greatest mystery for the understanding to please itself with the contemplation of; and to know him as *our Father*, is the greatest happiness for the will and affections to please themselves with the choice and enjoyment of.

2. Of this he had *hitherto spoken to them in proverbs*, which are wise sayings, and instructive, but figurative, and resting in generals. Christ had spoken many things very plainly to them, and expounded his parables privately to the disciples, but, 1. Considering their dullness and unaptness to receive what he said to them, he might be said *to speak in proverbs*; what he said to them was as a book sealed, *Isa. xxix. 11.* 2. Comparing the discoveries he had made to them, in what he had spoken in their ears, with what he would make to them, when he would *put his Spirit into their hearts*: All hitherto had been *but proverbs*: It would be a pleasing surprise to themselves, and they would think themselves in a new world when they would reflect upon all their former notions as confused and enigmatical, compared with their present clear and distinct knowledge of divine things. *The ministration of the letter* was nothing to *that of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. iii. 8—11. 3. Confining it to what he had said of *the Father*, and the counsels of *the Father*, what he had said was very dark, compared with what was shortly *to be revealed*, Col. ii. 2.

3. He would speak to them *plainly, παρρησια, with freedom*, of the Father. When the Spirit was poured out, the apostles attained to a much greater knowledge of divine things than they had before, as appears by the *utterance the Spirit gave them*, Acts ii. 4. These things which they had a very *confused idea* of before, they were led into the mysteries of; and what the Spirit shewed them, Christ is here said to shew them, for as the Father speaks by the Son, so the Son by the Spirit. But this promise will have its full accomplishment in heaven, where we shall see the Father as he is, *face to face*, not as we do now, *through a glass darkly*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. which is matter of comfort to us under the cloud of present darkness, by reason of which we cannot *order our speech*, but often disorder it. While we are here we have many questions to ask concerning the invisible God and the invisible world, but in that day we shall see all things clearly, and *ask no more questions*.

Secondly, He promiseth that by way of request, they should *ask nothing in vain*. It is taken for granted that all Christ's disciples give themselves to prayer: He had taught them by his precept and pattern to be much in prayer; that must be their support and comfort when he had left them; their instruction, direction, strength, and success, must be fetched in by prayer.

Now, 1. Here is an *express promise* of a grant, ver. 23. The preface to this promise is such as makes it inviolably sure, and leaves no room to question it; *Verily, verily, I say unto you*, I pawn my veracity upon it: The promise itself is incomparably rich and sweet; the golden sceptre is here held out to us with this word. *What is thy petition, and it shall be granted*. For he saith, *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you*. We had it before, chap. xiv. 13. What would we more? The promise is as express as we can desire.

(1.) We are here taught how to seek; we must *ask the Father in Christ's name*; we must have an eye to God as a Father, and come as children to him; and to Christ as a Mediator, and come as clients. *Asking of the Father* includes a sense of spiritual wants and a desire of spiritual blessings, with a conviction that they are to be had from God only: And also a humility of address to him, with a believing confidence in him, as a Father able and ready to help us. *Asking in Christ's name* includes an acknowledgement of our own unworthiness to receive any favour from God, and a complacency in the method God has taken in keeping up a correspondence with us by his Son, and an entire dependance upon Christ as *the Lord our righteousness*.

(2.) We are here told how we shall speed; *he will give it you*. What more can we wish for, than to have what we want, nay, to have what we will, in conformity to God's will, for the asking. *He will give it you from whom proceedeth every good and perfect gift*. What Christ purchased by the merit of his death, he needed not for himself, but intended it for, and assigned it to his faithful followers: and having given a valuable consideration for it, which was accepted in full; by this promise he draws a bill as it were upon the treasury in heaven, which we are to present by prayer, and in *his name* to ask for that which is purchased and promised, according to the true intent of the new covenant. Christ had promised them great illumination by the Spirit, but they must pray for it, and did so, Acts i. 14. God will for this be enquired of. He had promised them perfection hereafter, but what shall they do in the mean time? They must continue *praying*. Perfect fruition is reserved for the land of our rest; *asking and receiving* is the comfort of the land of our pilgrimage.

2. Here is an invitation to them to petition. It is thought sufficient if great men permit addresses, but Christ calls upon us to petition, ver. 24.

1. He looks back upon their practice hitherto, *hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name*. That refers either, 1. To the matter of their prayers. Ye have asked nothing comparatively, nothing to what you might have asked, and will ask when the Spirit is poured out. See what a generous benefactor our Lord Jesus is above all benefactors: he gives liberally, and is so far from upbraiding us with the frequency and largeness of his gifts, that he rather upbraids us with the seldomness and straitness of our requests: *You have asked nothing* in comparison of what you want, and what I have to give, and have promised to you. We are bid to *open our mouth wide*. Or, 2. To the name in which they prayed. They prayed many a prayer, but never so expressly in the name of Christ as now he was directing them to do; for he had not as yet offered up that great sacrifice, in the virtue of which our prayers were to be accepted, nor entered upon his intercession for us, the incense whereof was to perfume all our devotions, and to enable us to pray in his name. Hitherto they had cast out devils, and healed diseases in the name of Christ, as a king and prophet, but they could not as yet distinctly pray, *in the name* as a priest.

2. He looks forward to their practice for the future. *Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full*. Here, 1. He directs them to ask for all that which they needed, and he had promised. 2. He assures them that they shall receive. What we ask from a principal of grace, God will graciously give: *Ye shall receive it*. There is something more in that than in the promise, that he will give it. He will not only give it, but give you to receive it, give you the comfort and benefit of it, *a heart to eat of it*, Eccl. vi. 2. 3. That thereby *their joy shall be full*. Which speaks, 1. The blessed effect of the *prayer of faith*, it helps to fill up the *joy of faith*. Would we have our joy full, as full as it is capable of being in this world, we must be

much in prayer. When we are bid to *rejoice evermore*, it follows immediately, *pray without ceasing*. See how high we are to aim in prayer; not only at peace but joy, a *fulfilling of joy*. Or, 2. The blessed effects of the *answer of peace*. Ask, and ye shall receive that which will *fill your joy*. Christ's gifts, through Christ, fill the treasures of the soul, they fill its joys, *Prov. viii. 21*. Ask for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and ye shall receive it; and whereas other knowledge *increaseth sorrow*, Eccl. i. 18. the knowledge he gives will increase, will fill *your joy*.

3. Here are the grounds upon which they might hope to speed, ver. 26. 27. which are summed up in short by the apostle, 1 John ii. 1. *We have an advocate with the Father*.

1. We have an advocate, and as to that Christ saw cause at present not to insist upon it, only to make the following encouragement shine the brighter: *I say unto you, not that I will pray the Father for you*. Suppose I should not tell you that I will intercede for you, should not undertake to solicit every particular cause you have depending there, yet it may be a general ground of comfort, that I have settled a correspondence between you and God; have erected a throne of grace, and consecrated for you a *new and living way in the holiest*. He speaks as if they needed not any further favours, when he had prevailed for the gift of the Holy Ghost *to make intercession within them*, as a Spirit of adoption, crying *Abba, Father*; as if they had no further need of him to pray for them now, but we shall find he doth *more for us* than he *saith he will*. Men's performances often come short of their promises, but Christ's go beyond them.

2. We have to do with a Father, which is so great an encouragement, that it doth in a manner supersede the other. *For the Father himself loveth you, και ιμας*, he is a friend to you, and you cannot be better befriended, Note, The disciples of Christ are the beloved of God himself. Christ not only turned away God's wrath from us, and brought us into a covenant of peace and reconciliation, but purchased his favour for us, and brought us unto a covenant of friendship. Observe what an emphasis is laid upon this, *the Father himself loveth you*; who is perfectly happy in the enjoyment of himself, whose self-love is both his infinite rectitude, and his infinite blessedness, yet he is pleased to love you. The Father himself, whose favour you have forfeited, and whose wrath you have incurred, and with whom you need an advocate, he *himself* now loves you.

Observe, 1. Why the Father loved the disciples of Christ, *because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God*, i. e. because ye are my disciples indeed; not as if the love began on their side, but when by his grace he has wrought in us a love to him, he is well pleased with the work of his own hands. See here, 1. What is the character of Christ's disciples; they loved him, because they *believe he came out from God*, is the only begotten of the Father, and his high-commissioner to the world. Note, Faith in Christ works by love to him, Gal. v. 6. If we believe him to be the Son of God, we cannot but love him as infinitely lovely in himself; and if we believe him to be our Saviour, we cannot but love him as the most kind to us. Observe with what respect Christ is pleased to speak of his disciples' love to him, and how kindly he took it; he speaks of it as that which recommended them to his Father's favour. Ye have loved me, and believed in me when the world has hated and rejected me; and you shall be distinguished who have thus distinguished yourselves. 2. See what advantage Christ's faithful disciples have, the Father loves them, and that because they love Christ; so well pleased is he in him, that he is well pleased with all his friends.

2. What encouragement this gave them in prayer. They need not fear speeding when they came to one that loved them, and wished them well. 1. This cautions us against hard thoughts of God. When we are taught in prayer to plead Christ's merit and intercession, it is not as if all the kindness were in Christ only, and in God nothing but wrath and fury; no, the matter is not so, the Father's love and good-will appointed Christ to be the mediator; so that we owe Christ's merit to God's mercy in giving him for us. 2. Let it cherish and confirm in us good thoughts of God. Believers that love Christ ought to know that God loves them, and therefore to come boldly to him as children to a living Father.

28. ¶ I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. 29. His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. 30. Now we are sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. 31. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? 32. Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. 33. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Two things Christ here comforts his disciples with,

First, With an assurance that though he was leaving the world he was returning to his Father, from whom he came forth, ver. 28—32. Where we have,

1. A plain declaration of Christ's mission from the Father, and his return to him, ver. 28. *I am come forth from the Father, and am come, as you see, into the world: Again I leave the world, as you will see shortly, and go to the Father*. This is the conclusion of the whole matter: There was nothing he had more inculcated upon them, than these two things, whence he came, and whither he went; the *Alpha* and *Omega* of the *mystery of godliness*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. That the Redeemer, in his entrance, was *God manifest in the flesh*, and, in his exit, was *received up into glory*. These two great truths are here, 1. Contracted, and put into a few words. Brief summaries of Christian doctrine are of great use to young beginners. The principles of the oracles of God brought into a light compass in creeds and catechisms have, like the beams of the sun contracted in a burning-glass, conveyed divine light and heat with a wonderful power. Such we have, Job xxviii. 28. Eccl. xii. 13. 1 Tim. i. 15. Tit. ii. 11, 12. 1 John v. 11. much in a little. 2. Compared and set the one over against the other. There is an admirable harmony in divine truths; they do both corroborate and illustrate one another; Christ's coming and his going do so; Christ had commended his disciples for believing that he *came forth from God*, ver. 27: and from thence infers the necessity and equity of his returning to God again, which therefore should not seem to them either strange or sad. Note, The due improvement of what we know and own would help us into the understanding of that which seems difficult and doubtful.

If we ask concerning the Redeemer, whence he came, and whither he went, we are here told,

1. That he came forth from the Father, who sanctified and sealed him; and he came into this world, this lower world, this world of mankind, among whom by his incarnation he was pleased to incorporate himself: Here his business lay, and hither he came to attend it. He left his home for this strange country; his palace for the cottage; wonderful condescension!

2. That when he had done his work on earth, he left the world, and went back to his Father at his ascension. He was not forced away, but made it his own act and deed to leave the world, to return to it no more till he comes to put an end to it; yet still he is spiritually present with his church, and will be to the end.

3. The disciples' satisfaction in this declaration, ver. 29, 30. *Lo, now speakest thou plainly.* It should seem this one word of Christ did them more good than all the rest, though he had said many things likely enough to fasten upon them. The Spirit, as the wind, blows when and where, and by what word he pleaseth; perhaps a word that has been spoken once, yet twice, and not perceived, yet being often repeated takes hold at last.

Two things they improved in by this saying,

1. In knowledge; *Lo, now thou speakest plainly.* When they were in the dark concerning what he said, they did not say, *Lo, now speakest thou obscurely*, as blaming him; but now they apprehended his meaning, they give him glory for condescending to their capacity, *Lo, now thou speakest plainly.* Divine truths are then most likely to do good when they are spoken plainly, 1 Cor. ii. 4. Observe how they triumphed, as the mathematician did with his *λογισμός*, when he had lit upon a demonstration he had long been in quest of, *I have found it, I have found it.* Note. When Christ is pleased to speak plainly to our souls, and to bring us with open face to behold the glory, we have reason to rejoice in it.

2. In faith: *Now are we sure.* Observe,

1. What was the matter of their faith, *we believe that you comest forth from God.* He had said, ver. 27. that they did believe this, Lord, say they, we do believe it, and we have cause to believe it, and we know that we believe it, and have the comfort of it.

2. What was the motive of their faith, his omniscience. This proved him a teacher come from God, and more than a prophet; that he knew all things, which they were convinced of by this, that he resolved those doubts which were hid in their hearts, and answered the scruples they had not confessed. Note. Those know Christ best that know him by experience; that can say of his power, it works in me; of his love, that he loved me. And thus proves Christ not only to have a divine mission, but to be a divine person; that he is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart, therefore the essential, eternal Word, Heb. iv. 12, 13. He has made all the churches to know that he searcheth the reins and the heart, Rev. ii. 23. This confirmed the faith of the disciples here, at it made the first impression upon the woman of Samaria, that Christ told her all things that ever she did, John iv. 29. and upon Nathanael, that Christ saw him under the fig-tree, John i. 49.

These words, *And needest not that any man should ask thee*, may speak either, 1. Christ's uptness to teach. He prevents us with his instructions, and is communicative of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are hid in him, and needs not to be importuned. Or, 2. His ability to teach. Thou needest not, as other teachers, to have the learners doubts told thee, for thou knowest without being told what they stumble at. The best of teachers can only answer what is spoken, but Christ can answer what is thought, what we are afraid to ask, as the disciples were, Mark ix. 32. Thus he can have compassion, Heb. v. 2.

The gentle rebuke Christ gave the disciples for their confidence, that they now understood him, ver. 31, 32. observing how they triumphed in their attainments, he said, *Do ye now believe? Do ye now look upon yourselves as advanced and confirmed disciples? Do ye now think you shall make no more blunders? Alas, ye know not your own weakness; you will very shortly be scattered every man to his own, &c.* Here we have,

1. A question designed to put them upon consideration, *do ye now believe?*

1. If now, why not sooner? Have ye not heard the same things many a time before? They who after many instructions and invitations are at last persuaded to believe, have reason to be ashamed that they stood it out so long. 2. If now, why not ever? When an hour of temptation comes, where will your faith be then? As far as there is inconstancy in our faith, there is cause to question the sincerity of it, and to ask, do we indeed believe?

2. A prediction of their fall; that how confident soever they were now of their own stability, in a little time they would all desert him; which was fulfilled that very night, when upon his being seized by a party of the guards, all his disciples forsook him and fled, Matt. xxvi. 56. They were scattered, 1. From one another, they shifted every one for his own safety, without any care or concern for each other. Troublous times are times of scattering to Christian societies; in the cloudy and dark day the flock of Christ is dispersed, Ezek. xxxix. 12. so Christ as a society is not visible. 2. Scattered from him; *ye shall leave me alone.* They should have been witnesses for him upon his trial, should have ministered to him in his sufferings; if they could have given him no comfort, they might have done him some credit; but they were ashamed of his chain, and afraid of sharing with him in his sufferings, and left him alone. Note. Many a good cause when it is distressed by its enemies is deserted by its friends. The disciples had continued with Christ in his other temptations, and yet turned their back upon him now; those that are tried do not always prove trusty. If we at any time find our friends unkind to us, let us remember that Christ's were so to him.

When they left him alone they were scattered every man to his own; not to their own possessions or habitations, those were in Galilee; but to their own friends and acquaintance in Jerusalem; every one went his own way where he fancied he should be most safe. Every man to secure his own; i. e. himself and his own life. Note. Those will not dare to suffer for their religion that seek their own things more than the things of Christ, and that look upon the things of this world as their *τα ἑαυτῶν*, their own property, and in which their happiness is bound up. Now observe here,

1. Christ knew before that his disciples would thus desert him in the critical moment, and yet he was still tender of them, and in nothing unkind. We are ready to say of some, if we could have foreseen their ingratitude, we would not have been so prodigal of our favours to them; Christ did foresee theirs and yet was kind to them.

2. He told them of it to be a rebuke to their exultation in their present attainments. *Do ye now believe?* Be not high-minded, but fear; for you will find your faith so sorely shaken as to make it questionable whether it be sincere or no in a little time. Note. Even then when we are taking the comfort of our graces it is good to be minded of our danger from our corruptions. When our faith is strong, our love flaming, and evidences clear, yet we cannot infer from thence that to-morrow shall be as this day. Even then when we have most reason to think we stand, yet we have reason enough to take heed lest we fall.

3. He spoke of it as a thing very near. *The hour was already come in a*

manner, when they would be as shy of him as ever they had been fond of him. Note. A little time may procure great changes, both concerning us and in us.

4. An assurance of his own comfort notwithstanding; *yet I am not done.* He would not be thought to complain of their deserting him, as if it were any real damage to him; for in their absence we should be sure of his Father's presence, which was *intra omnium*, the Father is with me. We may consider this,

1. As a privilege peculiar to the Lord Jesus; the Father was so with him in his sufferings as he never was with any, for still he was in the bosom of the Father. The divine nature did not desert the human nature, but supported it and put an invincible comfort and an inestimable value into his sufferings. The Father had engaged to be with him in his whole undertaking, Psalm lxxxix. 21, &c. and to preserve him, Isa. xlix. 8. and this emboldened him, Isa. l. 7. then when he complained of his Father's forsaking him, yet he called him my God, and presently after, was so well assured of his favourable presence with him as to commit his Spirit into his hand. This he had comforted himself with all along, John viii. 21. *He that sent me is with me, the Father hath not left me alone*, and especially now at last. This assists our faith in the acceptableness of Christ's satisfaction; no doubt the Father was well pleased in him, for he went along with him in his undertaking from first to last.

2. As a privilege common to all believers, by virtue of their union with Christ, when they are alone they are not alone, but the Father is with them.

1. When solitude is their choice, when they are alone as Isaac in the field, Nathanael under their fig-tree, Peter under the house-top meditating and praying, the Father is with them. They that converse with God in solitude are never less alone than when alone. A good God and a good heart are good company at any time. 2. When solitude is their affliction, their enemies lay them alone, and their friends leave them so; their company like Job's is made desolate, yet they are not so much alone as they are thought to be, the Father is with them, as he was with Joseph in his bonds, and with John in his banishment. In their greatest troubles they are as one whom his Father pities, as one whom his mother comforts. And while we have God's favourable presence with us, we are happy and ought to be easy, though all the world forsake us. *Non Deo tribuimus justum honorem nisi solus ipse nobis sufficit.* Calvin.

Secondly, He comforts them with a promise of peace in him by virtue of his victory over the world, whatever troubles they might meet with in it, ver. 33. *These things I have spoken, that in me ye might have peace; and if ye have it not in me ye will not have it at all, for in the world ye shall have tribulation; you must expect no other, and yet may cheer up yourselves, for I have overcome the world.* Observe,

1. The end Christ aimed at in preaching this farewell sermon to his disciples; that in him they might have peace. He did not hereby intend to give them a full view of that doctrine which they were shortly to be made masters of, by the pouring out of the Spirit, but only to satisfy them for the present, that his departure from them was really for the best. Or, we may take it more generally, Christ had said all this to them, that by enjoying him, they might have the best enjoyment of themselves. Note, 1. It is the will of Christ that his disciples should have peace within, whatever their troubles may be without. 2. Peace in Christ is the only true peace, and in him alone believers have it, for *this man shall be the peace*, Micah v. 5. *Through him we have peace with God, and so in him we have peace in our own minds.* 3. The word of Christ aims at this, that in him we may have peace. Peace is the fruit of the lips, of his lips, Isa. lvii. 19.

2. The entertainment they were likely to meet with in the world. You shall not have outward peace, never expect it; though they were sent to proclaim peace on earth, and good will towards men, they must expect trouble on earth and ill will from men. Note. It has been the lot of Christ's disciples to have more or less tribulation in this world. Men persecute them because they are so good, and God corrects them because they are no better. Men design to cut them off from the earth, and God designs by affliction to make them meet for heaven; and so between both they shall have tribulation.

3. The encouragement Christ gives them with reference hereunto; but be of good cheer, *dear ones*, not only be of good comfort, but be of good courage; have a good heart on it, and all shall be well. Note. In the midst of the tribulations of this world it is the duty and interest of Christ's disciples to be of good cheer, to keep up their delight in God whatever is pressing, and their hope in God whatever is threatening; as sorrowful indeed in compliance with the temper of the climate, and yet always rejoicing, always cheerful, 2 Cor. vi. 20. even in tribulation, Rom. v. 3.

4. The ground of that encouragement, *I have overcome the world.* Christ's victory is a Christian's triumph. Christ overcame the prince of this world, disarmed him and cast him out; and still treads Satan under our feet. He overcame the children of this world, by the conversion of many to the faith and obedience of his gospel, making them the children of his kingdom. When he sends his disciples to preach the gospel to all the world, be of good cheer, faith he, *I have overcome the world* as far as I have gone, and so shall you, for many a time he put his enemies to silence, to shame; and be you of good cheer, for the Spirit will enable you to do so too. He overcame the evil things of the world by submitting to them; he endured the cross, despising it and the shame of it; and the good things of it, by being wholly dead to them; its honours had no beauty in his eye, its pleasures no charms. Never was there such a conqueror of the world as Christ was, and we ought to be encouraged by it; 1. Because Christ has overcome the world before us; so that we may look upon it as a conquered enemy, that has many a time been baffled. Nay, 2. He has conquered it for us, as the captain of our salvation; we are interested in his victory; by his cross the world is crucified to us, which speaks it completely conquered and put into our possession: all is yours, even the world. Christ having overcome the world, believers have nothing to do but to pursue their victory and divide the spoil; and this we do by faith, 1 John v. 4. *We are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

C H A P. XVII.

This chapter is a prayer, it is the Lord's prayer, the Lord Christ's prayer. There was one Lord's prayer, which he taught us to pray, and did not pray himself; for he needed not to pray for the forgiveness of sin; but this was properly and peculiarly his, and suited him only as a Mediator, and is a sampler of his intercession, and yet is of use to us both for instruction and encouragement in prayer. Observe, (1.) The circumstances of the prayer, ver. 1. (2.) The prayer itself, (1.) He prays for himself, ver. 1—5. (2.) He prays for those that are his. And there see, (1.) The general pleas with which he introduceth his petitions for them, ver. 6—10. (2.) The particular petitions he puts up

up for them, (1.) *That they might be kept*, ver. 11—16. (2.) *That they might be sanctified*, ver. 17—19. (3.) *That they might be united*, ver. 21 and ver. 20—23. (4.) *That they might be glorified*, ver. 21—26.

1. **THOSE** words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: 2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. 3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. 4. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. 5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

- Here is, (1.) The circumstance of this prayer, ver. 1. Many a solemn prayer Christ made in the days of his flesh, sometimes he continued all night in prayer. But none of his prayers are recorded so fully as this. Observe,

1. The time when he prayed this prayer; when he had *spoken these words*, had given the foregoing farewell to his disciples, he prayed this prayer in their hearing: so that,

1. It was a prayer *after sermons*; when he had spoken from God to them, he turned to speak to God for them. Note, Those we *preach to* we must *pray for*. He that used to prophecy upon the dry bones was also to pray, *Come O breath*, and *breathe* upon them. And the word preached should be prayed over, for God *gives the increase*.

2. It was a prayer *after sacrament*; after Christ and his disciples had eaten the passover and the Lord's Supper together, and he had given them a suitable exhortation, he closed the solemnity with this prayer; that God would preserve the good impressions of the ordinance upon them.

3. It was a family prayer. Christ's disciples were his family, and, to set a good example before masters of family, he not only as a son of Abraham taught his household, Gen. xviii. 19. but as a son of David blessed his household, 2 Sam. vi. 20. prayed for them and with them.

4. It was a parting prayer; when we and our friends are parting, it is good to part with prayer, Acts xx. 36. Christ was parting by death, and that parting should be sanctified and sweetened by prayer. Dying Jacob blessed the twelve patriarchs, dying Moses the twelve tribes, and so here dying Jesus the twelve apostles.

5. It was a prayer that was a *preface to his sacrifice* he was now about to offer on earth, specifying the favours and blessings designed to be purchased by the merit of his death for those that were his: like a *deed leading the uses of a fine* and directing to what intents and purposes it shall be levied. Christ prayed then as a priest now offering sacrifice, in the virtue of which all prayers were to be made.

6. It was a prayer that was a specimen of his intercession, which he ever lives to make for us within the veil. Not that in his exalted state he addresseth himself to his Father by way of humble petition as when he was on earth. No, his intercession in heaven is a presenting of his merit to his Father, with a suing out of the benefit of it for all his chosen ones.

2. The outward expression of fervent desire which he used in this prayer; he *lift up his eyes to heaven*, as before, John xi. 41. not that Christ needed thus to engage his own attention, but he was pleased thus to sanctify this gesture to those that use it, and justify it against those that ridicule it. It is significant of the lifting up of the soul to God in prayer; Psalm xxv. 1. *Sursum corda*, was anciently used as a call to prayer, *up with your hearts*, up to heaven; thither we must direct our desires in prayer, and thence we must expect to receive the good things we pray for.

(2.) The first part of the prayer itself, in which Christ prays for himself. Observe here,

1. He prays to God as a Father. He *lifted up his eyes and said Father*. Note, as prayer is to be made to God only, so it is our duty in prayer to eye him as a Father, and to call him our Father. All that have the Spirit of adoption are taught to cry *Abba, Father*, Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 6. If God be our Father we have liberty of access to him, ground of confidence in him, and great expectations from him. Christ calls him here *holy Father*, ver. 11. and *righteous Father*, ver. 25. For it will be of great use to us in prayer, both for our direction and encouragement, to call God as we hope to find him.

2. He prayed for himself first; though Christ as God was prayed to, Christ as man prayed; thus *it became him to fulfil all righteousness*. It was said to him as it is said to us, *ask and I will give thee*, Psalm ii. 8. What he had purchased he must ask for, and shall we expect to have what we never merited, but have a thousand times forfeited, unless we pray for it? This puts an hour upon prayer, that it was the messenger Christ sent on his errands, the way in which he even corresponded with heaven. It likewise gives great encouragement to praying people, and cause to hope that even the *prayer of the destitute* shall not be despised; time was when he that is advocate for us had a cause of his own to solicit, a great cause, on the success of which depended all his honour as Mediator; and this he was to solicit in the same method that is prescribed to us, *by prayers and supplications*, Heb. v. 7. so that he knows the heart of a petitioner, Exod. xxiii. 9. he knows the way. Now observe,

1. Christ began with prayer for himself, and afterwards prayed for his disciples; this charity must *begin at home*, though it must not *end there*. We must love and pray for our neighbours as ourselves, and therefore must in a right manner love and pray for ourselves first.

2. He was much shorter in his prayer for himself than in his prayer for his disciples. Our prayer for the church must not be crowded into a corner of our prayers: in making *supplications for all saints* we have room enough to enlarge, and should not straiten ourselves.

Now here are two petitions which Christ puts up for himself, and they two are one, that he might be glorified. But this one petition, *glorify thou me*, is twice put up, because it has a double reference. 1. To the prosecution of his undertaking further, *glorify me, that I may glorify thee*, in doing what is agreed upon to be yet done, ver. 1, 2, 3. And 2. To the performance of his undertaking hitherto, *glorify me, for I have glorified thee*. I have done my part, and now, Lord, do thine, ver. 4, 5.

First, Christ here prays to be glorified, in order to his glorifying God, ver. 1. *Glorify thy Son* according to thy promise, *that thy Son may glorify thee* according to his undertaking. Here observe,

1. What he prays for, that he might be glorified in this world. *The hour is come* when all the powers of darkness will continue to vilify thy Son, now Father, glorify him. The Father glorified the Son upon earth, 1. Even in his sufferings, by the signs and wonders which attended them. When they

that came to take him were thunder-struck with a word, when Judas confessed him innocent, and sealed that confession with his own guilty blood; when the judge's wife asleep, and the judge himself awakened pronounced him righteous; when the sun was darkened and the veil of the temple rent, then the Father not only justified, but glorified the Son. Nay, 2. Even by his sufferings; when he was crucified, he was magnified, he was glorified, John xiii. 31. It was in his cross that he conquered Satan and death, his thorns were a crown, and Pilate in the inscription over his head wrote more than he thought. But, 3. Much more after his sufferings; the Father glorified the Son when he *raised him from the dead*, shewed him openly to chosen witnesses, and poured out the Spirit to support and plead his cause, and set up his kingdom among men, then he *glorified him*. This he here prays for and insists upon.

2. What he pleads to enforce this request,

1. He pleads *relation*, *glorify thy Son*; thy Son as God, as Mediator. It is in consideration of this that the heathen are *given him for an inheritance*, for *thou art my Son*, Psalm ii. 7, 8. The devil had tempted him to renounce his sonship with an offer of the kingdoms of this world, but he rejected it with disdain, and depended upon his Father for his preferment. And here applies himself to him for it. Note, They that have received the adoption of sons may in faith pray for the inheritance of sons; if sanctified, then glorified; *Father, glorify thy Son*.

2. He pleads *the time*. *The hour is come*; the season prefixed to an hour. The hour of Christ's passion was determined in the counsel of God. He had often said his hour was not yet come: but now it *was come* and he knew it. *Man knows not his time*, Eccl. ix. 12. but the Son of man did. He calls it *this hour*, John xii. 27. and here *the hour*, compare Mark xiv. 35, John xvi. 31. for the hour of the Redeemer's death, which was also the hour of the Redeemer's birth, was the most signal and remarkable hour, and without doubt the most critical that ever was since the clock of time was first set a going. Never was there such an hour as that, nor did ever any hour challenge such expectations of it before, nor such reflections upon it after.

(1.) *The hour is come* in the midst of which I need to be owned; now is the hour when this grand affair is come to the crisis; after many a skirmish the decisive battle between heaven and hell is now to be fought, and that great cause in which God's honour and man's happiness are together embarked must now be either won or lost for ever: The two champions, David and Goliath, Michael and the Dragon, are now entering the lists: the trumpet sounded for an engagement that will be irretrievable, fatal either to the one or the other; *now glorify thy Son*, now give him victory over principalities and powers; now let the bruising of his heel be the breaking of the Serpent's head; now let thy Son be upheld as, not to fail or be discouraged. When Joshua went forth conquering and to conquer, it is said the Lord magnified Joshua; so he glorified his Son when he made the cross his triumphant chariot.

(2.) *The hour is come*, in the close of which I expect to be crowned: *the hour is come*, when I am to be glorified, and set at thy right hand; betwixt him and that glory there intervened a bloody scene of suffering, but being short, he speaks as if he made little of it; *the hour is come when I must be glorified*: and he did not expect it till then. Good Christians in a trying hour, particularly in a dying hour, may thus plead; *now the hour is come*, stand by me, appear for me, now or never; now the *earthly tabernacle is to be dissolved*, the hour is come, that I should be glorified, 2 Cor. v. 1.

3. He pleads the Father's own interest and concern herein, *that thy Son also may glorify thee*; for he had consecrated his whole undertaking to his Father's honour, he desired to be carried triumphantly through his sufferings to his glory, that he might glorify the Father two ways, 1. By the death of the cross, which he was now to suffer; *Father glorify thy name*, expressed the great intention of his sufferings, which was to receive his Father's injured honour among men, and by his satisfaction, *to come up to the glory of God*, which man, by his sin, came short of. *Father*, own me in my sufferings, that I may honour thee by them. 2. By the doctrine of the cross, which was now shortly to be published to the world, by which God's kingdom was to be re-established among men: He prays that his Father would grace his sufferings, and crown them, as not only to take off the offence of the cross, but to make it to them that are saved the wisdom of God, and the power of God. If God had not glorified Christ crucified, by raising him from the dead, his whole undertaking had been crushed; therefore glorify me, that I may glorify thee.

Now hereby he hath taught us, 1. What to eye and aim at in our prayers, in all our designs and desires, and that is the honour of God. It being our chief end to glorify God, other things must be sought and attended to in subordination and subserviency to the Lord; do this and the other for thy servant, that thy servant may glorify thee: Give me health that I may glorify thee with my body; success, that I may glorify thee with my estate, &c. *Hallowed be thy name*, must be our first petition, which must fix our end in all our other petitions, 1 Pet. iv. 11. 2. He hath taught us what to expect and hope for: If we sincerely set ourselves to glorify our Father; he will not be wanting to do that for us which is requisite to put us into a capacity of glorifying him, to give us the grace he knows sufficient, and the opportunity he sees convenient: But if we secretly honour ourselves more than him, it is just with him to leave us in the hand of our own counsels, and then, instead of honouring ourselves, we shall shame ourselves.

4. He pleads his commission, ver. 2, 3. he desires to glorify his Father in conformity to, and in pursuance of, the commission given him; *Glorify thy Son, as thou hast given him power; glorify him in the execution of the powers thou hast given him*; so it is connected with the petition; or, *that thy Son may glorify thee according to the power given him*; so it is connected with the plea. Now see here the power of the Mediator:

(1.) The original of his power. *Thou hast given him power*; he has it from God, to whom all power belongs. Man, in his fallen state, must, in order to his recovery, be taken under a new model of government, which could not be erected but by a special commission under the broad seal of heaven, directed to the undertaker of that glorious work, and constituting him sole arbitrator of the grand difference that was, and sole guarantee of the grand alliance that was to be between God and man, so, as to this office he received his power, which was to be executed in a way distinct from his power and government as Creator. Note, The church's king is no usurper as the prince of this world is; Christ's right rule is incontestable.

(2.) The extent of his power. *He has power over all flesh*.

1. Over all mankind. *He has power* in and over the world of Spirits, the power of the upper and unseen world are subject to him, 1 Pet. iii. 23. but being now mediating between God and man, he here pleads his power over all flesh: They were men whom he was to subdue and save, out of that race he had a remnant given him, and therefore all that rank of beings was put under his feet.

2. Over mankind, considered as corrupt and fallen, for so he is called *flesh*, Gen. vi. 3. If he had not in this sense been *flesh*, he had not needed a Redeemer. Over this sinful race the Lord Jesus has all power, and all judgment, concerning them, is committed to him; power to bind or loose,

acquaint or condemn: power on earth to forgive sins, or not. Christ, as mediator, has the government of the whole world put into his hand, he is *King of nations*, has power over those that know him not, nor obey his gospel: whom he doth not rule, he over-rules, *Psal. xxii. 28—lxxii. 8. Matt. xxviii. 18. John v. 35.*

(3.) The great intention and design of this power; *that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.* Here is the mystery of our salvation laid open.

1. Here is the Father making over the elect to the Redeemer, and giving them to him as his charge and trust, as the crown and recompence of his undertaking: He has a sovereign power over all the fallen race, but a peculiar interest in the chosen remnant; *all things were put under his feet*, but they were *delivered into his hand*.

2. Here is the Son undertaking to secure the happiness of those that were given him, that he should *give eternal life to them.* See how great the authority of the Redeemer is! he hath lives and crowns to give, *eternal lives* that never die, *immortal crowns* that never fade. Now consider how great the Lord Jesus is, who hath such preferment in his gift; and how gracious he is in giving eternal life to those whom he undertakes to save. 1. He sanctifies them in this world, gives them the *spiritual life* which is *eternal life* in the bud and embryo, *John iv. 14.* Grace in the soul, is heaven in that soul. 2. He will glorify them in the other world, their happiness shall be completed in the vision and fruition of God: And this only is mentioned, because it supposeth all the other parts of his undertaking, teaching them, sanctifying for them, sanctifying them, and preparing them for that *eternal life*; and needed all the other were in order to this; we are *called to his kingdom and glory*, and *begotten to the inheritance*: what is last in execution was first in intention, and *that is eternal life*.

3. Here is the subserviency of the Redeemer's universal dominion to this: *He hath power over all flesh*, on purpose that he might *give eternal life to the elect number.* Note, Christ's dominion over the children of men, is in order to the salvation of the children of God. *All things are for their sakes*, *2 Cor. iv. 15.* All Christ's laws, ordinances and promises, which are given to all, are designed effectually to convey *spiritual life*, and secure *eternal life to all that were given to Christ*; he is *head over all things to the church*: The administration of the kingdom of providence and grace are put into the same hand, that all things may be made to concur for good to the called.

(4.) Here is a further application of his grand design, ver. 3. *This is life eternal*, which I am empowered and have undertaken to give; this is the nature of it, and this the way leading to it, *to know thee the only true God*, and all the discoveries and principles of natural religion, and *Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*, as mediator, and the doctrines and laws of that holy religion, which he instituted for the recovery of man out of his lapsed state. Here is,

1. The great end which the Christian religion sets before us, and that is, *eternal life*, the happiness of an immortal soul in the vision and fruition of an eternal God: This he was to reveal to all, and secure to all that were given him. By the gospel, life and immortality are brought to hand, a life which transcends this as much in excellency as it doth in duration.

2. The sure way of attaining this blessed end, which is by the right knowledge of God and Jesus Christ; *this is life eternal to know thee*; which may be taken two ways, 1. *Life eternal* lies in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ: the present principle of this life is the believing knowledge of God and Christ; the future perfection of that life will be the intuitive knowledge of God and Christ: They that are brought into union with Christ, and live a life of communion with God in Christ, know, in some measure by experience what *eternal life* is, and will say, if this be heaven, heaven is sweet: See *Psal. xvii. 15.* 2. The knowledge of God and Christ leads to *life eternal*; this is the way in which Christ gives *eternal life*, by the knowledge of him that hath called us, *2 Pet. i. 3.* and this is the way in which we come to receive it.

The Christian religion shews the way to heaven.

1. By directing us to God, as the author and felicity of our being; for Christ died to bring us to God, to know him as our Creator, and to love him, obey him, submit to him, and trust in him as our Owner, Ruler, and Benefactor, to devote ourselves to him as our sovereign Lord, depend upon him as our chief good, and to direct all the praise as our highest end; *this is life eternal.* God is here called the *only true God*, to distinguish him from the false gods of the heathen, which were counterfeits and pretenders, not from the person of the Son, of whom it is expressly said, that he is the *true God and eternal life*, *1 John v. 20.* and who in this text is proposed as the object of the same religious regard with the Father. It is certain *there is but one only living and true God*, and the God we adore is he. He is the *true God*, and not a mere name of notion; the *only true God*; and all that ever set up as rivals with him, are vanity and a lie; the service of him is the only true religion.

2. By directing us to Christ Jesus, as the mediator between God and man: *Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* If man had continued innocent, the knowledge of the *only true God* would have been *life eternal* to him; but now he is fallen, there must be something more; now ye are under guilt, to know God, is to know him as a righteous Judge, whose curse we are under, and nothing more killing than to know this; we are therefore concerned to know Christ as our Redeemer, by whom alone we can now have access to God; it is *life eternal to believe in Christ*; and this he has undertaken to give to as many as were given him: See *John vi. 39, 40.* They that were acquainted with God and Christ, are already in the suburbs of life eternal.

Secondly, Christ here prays to be glorified, in consideration of his having glorified the Father hitherto, ver. 4, 5. The meaning of the former petition was, *glorify me* in this world; the meaning of the latter is, *glorify me* in the other world: *I have glorified thee on the earth, and now glorify thou me.* Observe here,

1. With what comfort Christ reflects on the life he had lived on earth; *I have glorified thee and finished my work*; it is as good as finished; He doth not complain of the poverty and disgrace he had lived in, what a weary life he had had upon the earth, as ever any man of sorrows had; he overlooks this, and pleaseth himself in reviewing the service he had done his Father, and the progress he had made in his undertaking; and this is here recorded.

(1.) For the honour of Christ, that his life upon earth did in all respects fully answer the end of his coming into the world. Note, 1. Our Lord Jesus had work given him to do by him that sent him; he came not into the world to live at ease, but to go about doing good, and to fulfil all righteousness. His Father gave him his work, his work in the vineyard; both appointed him to it, and assisted him in it. 2. The work that was given him to do, he finished: Though he had not, as yet, gone through the least part of his undertaking, yet he was so near being made perfect through sufferings, that he might say he had finished it: it was as good as done, he was giving it its finishing stroke, *τελευτων*. The word signifies his performing every part of his undertaking in the most complete and perfect manner.

3. Herein he glorified his Father; he pleased him, he praised him; it is the glory of God that his work is perfect, and the same is the glory of the Redeemer; what he is the author of, he will be the finisher of. It was a strange way for the Son to glorify the Father by abasing himself, that looked more likely to disparage him, yet it was contrived that so he should glorify him. *I have glorified thee on the earth*, i. e. in such a way as men on earth could bear the manifestation of thy glory.

(2.) It is recorded for example to all, that we may follow his example, 1. We must make it our business to do the work God has appointed us to do, according as our capacity, and the sphere of our activity is; we must each of us do all the good we can in this world. 2. We must aim at the glory of God in all. We must glorify him on the earth, which he has given unto the children of men, demanding only this quit-rent; on the earth, where we are in a state of probation and preparation for eternity. 3. We must persevere herein to the end of our days; we must not sit down till we have finished our work, and accomplished as a hireling our day.

(3.) It is recorded for encouragement to all those that rest upon him: If he have finished the work that was given him to do, then he is a complete Saviour, and did not do his work by the halves: And he that finished his work for us, will finish it in us to the day of Christ.

2. See with what confidence he expects the joy set before him, ver. 5. *Now, O Father, glorify thou me.* It is what he depends upon, and cannot be denied him.

(1.) See here what he prays for, *Glorify thou me*, as before, ver. 1. All repetitions in prayer are not to be counted vain repetitions; Christ prayed, saying the same words, *Matt. xxvi. 41.* and yet prayed more earnestly. What his Father had promised him, and he was assured of, yet he must pray for; promises are not designed to supersede prayers, but to be the guide of our desires, and the ground of our hopes. Christ being glorified, includes all the honours, powers, and joys of his exalted state. See how it is described.

1. It is a glory with God; not only *glorify my name on earth*, but *glorify me with thyself*: It was paradise, it was heaven, to be with his Father, as *Prov. viii. 33. Dan. vii. 13. Heb. viii. 1.* Note, the brightest glories of the exalted Redeemer, were to be displayed within the veil; where the Father manifests his glory. The praises of the upper world are offered up to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb in conjunction, *Rev. v. 13.* and the prayers of the lower world draw out grace and peace from God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ in conjunction; and thus the Father has glorified him with himself.

2. It is the glory he had with God before the world was. By this it appears, 1. That Jesus Christ, as God, had a being before the world was, co-eternal with the Father; our religion acquaints us with one that was before all things, and by whom all things consist. 2. That his glory with the Father is from everlasting, as well as his existence with the Father: for he was from eternity the brightness of his Father's glory, *Heb. i. 3.* As God's making the world only declared his glory, but made no real additions to it; so Christ undertook the work of redemption, not because he needed glory, for he had a glory with the Father before the world, but because we needed glory.

3. That Jesus Christ, in his state of humiliation, divested himself of this glory, and drew a veil over it; though he was still God, yet he was *God manifested in the flesh*, not in his glory: He had laid down this glory for a time as a pawn or pledge, that he would go through with his undertaking according to the appointment of his Father. 4. That in his exalted state he resumed this glory, and clad himself again with his former robes of light: Having performed his undertaking, he did as it were *reposcere pignus*, take up his pawn by this demand, *Glorify thou me*. He prays that even his human nature might be advanced to the highest honours it was capable of, his body a glorious body; and that the glory of the Godhead might now be manifested in the person of the Mediator, Emanuel, God-man. He doth not pray to be glorified with the princes and great men of the earth; no; he that knew both worlds and might choose which he would have his preferment in, chose it in the glory of the other world, as far exceeding all the glory of this. He had despised the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, when Satan offered them to him, and therefore might the more boldly claim the glories of the other world. Let the same mind be in us; Lord, give the glories of this world to whom thou wilt give them, but let me have my portion of glory in the world to come: It is no matter, though I be vilified with men; but Father, *Glorify thou me with thine own self*.

(2.) See here what he pleaded; *I have glorified thee*; and now, in consideration thereof, *glorify thou me.* For 1. There was an equity in it, and an admirable becomingness, that if God were glorified in him, he should glorify him in himself; as he had observed, *John xiii. 23.* Such an infinite value there was in what Christ did to glorify his Father, that he properly merited all the glory of his exalted state. If the Father were a gainer in his glory by the Son's humiliation, it was fit the Son should be no loser by it, at long run, in his glory.

2. It was according to the covenant between them, that if the Son would make his soul an offering for sin, he should divide the spoil with the strong, *Isa. liii. 10, 11.* and the kingdom should be his; and this he had an eye to, and depended upon in his sufferings; it was for the joy set before him that he endured the cross: And now in his exalted state, he still expects the completing of his exaltation, because he perfected his undertaking, *Heb. x. 13.*

3. It was the most proper evidence of his Father's accepting and approving the work he had finished. By the glorifying of Christ we are satisfied that God was satisfied, and therein a real demonstration was given, that his Father was well pleased in him as his beloved Son.

4. Thus we must be taught, that those, and those only, who glorify God on earth, and persevere in the work God hath given them to do, shall be glorified with the Father, when they must be no more in this world: Not that we can merit that glory as Christ did, but our glorifying God is required as an evidence of our interest in Christ, through whom *eternal life* is God's free gift.

6. ¶ I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me: and they have kept thy word. 7. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. 8. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me: and they have received them and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. 9. I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. 10. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine: and I am glorified in them.

Christ.

Christ having prayed for himself, comes next to pray for those that are his, and he knew them by name, though he did not here name them. Now observe here,

1. Whom he did not pray for, *ver. 9. I pray not for the world.* Note, There is a world of people that Jesus Christ did not pray for. It is not meant of the world of mankind in general, he prays for that here, *ver. 21. That the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* Nor is it meant of the Gentiles, in distinction from the Jews; but the world is here opposed to the elect, who are given to Christ out of the world. Take the world for a heap of unwinnowed corn in the floor, and God loves it, Christ prays for it, and dies for it, for a blessing is in it; but the Lord perfectly knowing them that are his, he eyes particularly them that were given him out of the world, extracts them; and then takes the world for the remaining heap of rejected worthless chaff, and Christ neither prays for it, nor dies for it, but abandons it, and the wind drives it away. These are called the world, because they are governed by the spirit of this world, and have their portion in it; for these Christ doth not pray; not but there are some things which he intercedes with God for on their behalf, as the dresser for the reprieve of the barren tree; but he doth not pray for them in this prayer, they have no part or lot in the blessings here prayed for. He doth not say, *I pray against the world*, as Elias made intercession against Israel, but *I pray not for them*, I pass them by, and leave them to themselves; they are not written in the Lamb's book of life, and therefore not in the breast plate of the great High-priest: And miserable is the condition of such, as of those whom the prophet was forbidden to pray for, and more so, *Jer. vii. 16.* We that know not who are chosen and who are passed by, must pray for all men, *1 Tim. ii. 1—4.* While there is life there is hope, and room for prayer. See *1 Sam. xii. 23.*

2. Whom he did pray for; not for the angels, but for the children of men. 1. He prays for those that were given him, meaning primarily the disciples that had attended him in the regeneration: but it is doubtless to be extended further, to all who come under the same character, who receive and believe the words of Christ, *ver. 6—8.* 2. He prays for all that should believe on him, *ver. 20.* and it is not only the petitions that follow, but those also that went before, that must be construed to extend to all believers, in every place, and every age; for he has a concern for them all, and calls things that are not, as though they were.

3. What encouragement he had to pray for them, and what the general pleas with which he introduced his petitions for them, and recommends them to his Father's favour; they are five.

First, The charge he had received concerning them: *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me*, *ver. 6.* and again, *ver. 7. Thou hast given them me, and they are of thee*; and again, *ver. 9. Them which thou hast given me.* Father, those I am now praying for, are such as thou hast intrusted me with, and what I have to say for them is in pursuance of the charge I have received concerning them. Now,

1. This is meant primarily of the disciples that then were, who were given to Christ as his pupils to be educated by him while he was on earth, and his agents to be employed for him when he went to heaven: They were given him to be the learners of his doctrine, the witnesses of his life and miracles, and the monuments of his grace and favour, in order to their being the publishers of his gospel, and the planters of his church. When they left all to follow him, this was the secret spring of that strange resolution; they were given to him, else they had not given themselves to him. Note, The apostleship and ministry, which is Christ's gift to the church, was first the Father's gift to Jesus Christ. As under the law the Levites were given to Aaron, *Numb. iii. 9.* so he, the great High-priest of our profession, the Father, gave the apostles first, and ministers in every age, to keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation, and to do the service of the tabernacle: See *Eph. iv. 8—11. Psalm lxxviii. 18.* Christ received this gift for men, that he might give it to men. As this puts a great honour upon the ministry of the gospel, and magnifies that office, which is so much vilified; so it lays a mighty obligation upon the ministers of the gospel, to devote themselves intirely to Christ's service, as being given to him.

2. But it is designed to extend to all the elect, for they are elsewhere said to be given to Christ, *John vi. 37—39.* and he often laid a stress upon this, that those he was to save were given to him as his charge, to his care they were committed, from his hand they were expected, and concerning them he received commandments. He here shews,

(1.) That the Father had authority to give them: *Thine they were.* He did not give that which was none of his own, but covenanted that he had a good title. The elect that the Father gave to Christ, were his own three ways: 1. They were creatures, and their lives and beings were derived from him: When they were given to Christ to be vessels of honour, they were in his hands, as clay in the hands of the potter, to be disposed of as God's wisdom saw most for God's glory. 2. They were criminals, and their lives and beings were forfeited to him. It was a remnant of fallen mankind that was given to Christ to be redeemed, that might have been made sacrifices to justice then, when they were pitched upon to be the monuments of mercy; might justly have been delivered to the tormentors, when they were delivered to the Saviour. 3. They were chosen, and their lives and beings were designed for him; they were set apart for God, and were consigned to Christ as his agent. This he insists upon again, *ver. 7. All things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee*; which, though it may take in all that appertained to his office as a mediator, yet seems especially to be meant of those that were given him: They are of thee, their being is of thee as the God of nature, their well being is of thee as the God of grace; they are all of thee, and therefore, Father, I bring them all to thee, that they may be all for thee.

(2.) That he did accordingly give them to the Son: *Thou gavest them me*, as sheep to the shepherd, to be kept; a patient to the physician, to be cured; children to a tutor to be educated; thus he will deliver up his charge, *Heb. ii. 13. The children thou hast given me.* They were delivered to Christ, 1. That the election of grace might not be frustrated, that not one, no not one of the little ones might perish: That great concern must be lodged in some one good hand, able to give sufficient security, that the purpose of God according to election might stand. 2. That the undertaking of Christ might not be fruitless; they were given to him as his seed, in whom he should see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied, *Isa. liii. 10, 11.* and might not spend his strength, and shed his blood for nought, and in vain, *Isa. xlix. 4.* We may plead, as Christ doth, Lord, keep my graces, keep my comforts, for thine they were and thou gavest them me.

Secondly, The care he had taken of them, to teach them, *ver. 6. I have manifested thy name to them.* And *ver. 8. I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me.* Observe here,

1. The great design of Christ's doctrine, which was to manifest God's name, to declare him, *John i. 18.* to instruct the ignorant, and rectify the mistakes of a dark and foolish world concerning God, that he might be better loved and worshipped.

2. His faithful discharge of this undertaking; I have done it: And his fidelity appears, 1. In the truth of his doctrine: It agreed exactly with the

instructions he received from his Father: He gave not only the things, but the very words that were given him. Ministers, in wording their message, must have an eye to the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth. 2. In the tendency of his doctrine, which was to manifest God's name. He did not seek himself, but, in all he did and said, aimed to magnify his Father. Note, 1. It is Christ's prerogative to manifest God's name to the souls of the children of men: No man knows the Father, but he to whom the Son will reveal him, *Matt. xi. 27.* He only hath acquaintance with the Father, and so is able to open the truth; and he only hath access to the spirits of men, and so is able to open the understanding. Ministers may publish the name of the Lord, as Moses, *Deut. xxxii. 3.* but Christ only can manifest that name. By the word of Christ, God is revealed to us; by the Spirit of Christ, God is revealed in us. Ministers may speak the words of God to us, but Christ can give us his words, can put them in us, as food, as treasure. 2. Sooner or later Christ will manifest God's name to all that were given him, and will give them his word to be the seed of their new birth, the support of their spiritual life, and the earnest of their everlasting bliss.

Thirdly, The good effect of the care he had taken of them, and the pains he had taken with them, *ver. 6. They have kept thy word*; *ver. 7. They have known that all things are of thee*, *ver. 8. They have received thy words*, and embraced thee, have given their assent and consent to them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and have believed that thou didst send me. Observe here,

(1.) What success the doctrine of Christ had among those that were given him, in several particulars.

1. They had received the words which I gave them, as the ground receives the seed, and the earth drinks in the rain: They attended to the words of Christ, apprehended in some measure the meaning of them, and were affected with them. They received the impression of them: It was to them an ingrafted word.

2. They have kept thy word, have continued in it: they have conformed to it. Christ's commandments is then only kept, when it is obeyed. They that were to teach others the commands of Christ, ought to be themselves observant to them. It was requisite they should keep what was committed to them, for it was to be transmitted by them to every place for every age.

3. They have understood the word, and have been sensible on what ground they went in receiving and keeping of it. They had been aware that thou art the original author of that holy religion which I am come to institute, that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee: All Christ's offices and powers, all the gifts of the Spirit, all his graces and comforts, which God gave without measure to him, were all from God; contrived by his wisdom, appointed by his will, and designed by his grace, for his own glory in man's salvation. Note, It is a great satisfaction to us, in our reliance upon Christ, that he, and all he is, and has, all he said and did, all he is doing and will do, is of God, *1 Cor. i. 30.* We may therefore venture our souls upon Christ's mediation, for it has a good bottom. If the righteousness be of God's appointing, we shall be justified; if the grace be of his dispensing, we shall be sanctified.

4. They have set their seal to it: *They have known surely that I came out from God*, *ver. 8.* See here,

(1.) What is to believe, it is to know surely, know that it is so of a truth. The disciples were very weak and defective in knowledge, yet Christ, who knew better than they knew themselves, passeth his word for them that they did believe. Note, We may know surely that, which we neither do nor can know fully; may know the certainty of the things which are not seen, though we cannot particularly describe the nature of them. *We walk by faith, which knows surely, not yet by sight, which knows clearly.*

(2.) What it is we are to believe; that Jesus Christ came out from God, as he is the Son of God, in his person the image of the invisible God, and that God did send him; that in his undertaking he is the ambassador of the eternal king: so that the Christian religion stands upon the same footing, and is of equal authority, with natural religion; and therefore all the doctrines of Christ are to be received as divine truths, all his commands obeyed as divine laws, and all his promises depended upon as divine securities.

(2.) How Jesus Christ speaks of this here: he enlarges upon it,

1. As pleased with it himself. Though the many instances of his disciples, dulness and weakness grieved him, yet their constant adherence to him, their gradual improvements, and their great attainments at last, were his joy. Christ is a matter that delights in the proficiency of his scholars: He accepts the sincerity of their faith, and graciously passeth by the infirmity of it. See how willing he is to make the best of us, and to say the best of us; thereby encouraging our faith in him, and teaching us charity to one another.

2. As pleading it with his Father. He is praying for those that were given him, and he pleads that they had given themselves to him. Note, The due improvements of grace received, is a good plea, according to the tenor of the new covenant, for further grace: for, so runs the promise, to him that hath shall be given. They that keep Christ's word, and believe on him, let Christ alone to commend them, and, which is more, to recommend them to his Father.

Fourthly, He pleads the Father's own interest in them, *ver. 9. I pray for them, for they are thine*; and this by virtue of a joint and mutual interest which he and the Father have in what pertaineth to each; *all mine are thine, and thine are mine*: Betwixt the Father and Son there can be no dispute (as there is among the children of men) about *meum* and *tuum*, for the matter was settled from eternity; *all mine are thine, and thine are mine.* Here is,

(1.) The plea particularly urged for his disciples: *They are thine.* The consigning the elect to Christ was so far from making them less the Father's, that it was in order to the making them the more so. Note, 1. All that receive Christ's word, and believe in him, are taken into covenant-relation to the Father, and are looked upon as his; Christ presents them to him, and they, through Christ, present themselves to him: Christ has redeemed us, not to himself only, but to God, *by his blood*, *Rev. v. 9, 10. They are first-fruits unto God*, *Rev. xiv. 4.* 2. This is a good plea in prayer, Christ here pleads it, *they are thine*: we may plead it for ourselves: *I am thine, save me*; and for others, as Moses, *Exod. xxxii. 11. They are thy people. They are thine*; wilt thou not provide for thine own? Wilt thou not secure them, that they may not be run down by the devil and the world? Wilt thou not secure thine interest in them, that they may not depart from thee? *They are thine, own them as thine.*

(2.) The foundation on which this plea is grounded: *All mine are thine, and thine are mine.* This speaks the Father and the Son to be, 1. One in essence. Every creature must say to God, *All mine are thine*; but none can say to him, *All thine are mine*, but he that is the same in substance with him, and equal in power and glory. 2. One in interest; no separate or divided interests in them.

1. What the Father has, as Creator, is delivered over to the Son, to be used and disposed of in subserviency to his great undertaking. *All things are delivered to him*, *Matt. xi. 27.* the grant so general, that nothing was excepted, but he that did put all things under him.

2. What the Son hath, as Redeemer, is designed for the Father, and his kingdom

kingdom shall shortly be delivered up to him. All the benefits of redemption, purchased by the Son, are intended for the Father's praise, and in his glory all the lines of his undertaking centre: *All mine are thine. The Son owns none for his that are not devoted to the service of the Father; nor will any thing be accepted as a piece of service to the Christian religion, which clashes with the dictates and laws of natural religion. In a limited sense, every true believer may say, All thine are mine; if God be ours in covenant, all he is and has, is so far ours, as that it shall be engaged for our good, and in an unlimited sense, every true believer doth say, Lord, All mine are thine; all laid at his feet to be servicable to him: And then what we have may be comfortably committed to God's care and blessing, when it is cheerfully submitted to his government and dispose: Lord, take care of what I have, for it is all thine.*

Fiftieth. He pleads his own concern in them: *I am glorified in them,*

1. *I have been glorified in them; what little honour Christ had in this world was among his disciples; he had been glorified by their attendance on him and obedience to him; their preaching and working miracles in his name; and therefore I pray for them.* Note, Those shall have an interest in Christ's intercession, in and by whom he is glorified.

2. *I am to be glorified in them, when I am gone to heaven; they are to bear up my name.* The apostles preached and wrought miracles in Christ's name, the Spirit in them glorified Christ, John xvi. 14. *I am glorified in them; and therefore, 1. I concern myself for them.* What little interest Christ has in this degenerate world, lies in his church; and therefore it and all its affairs, lie near his heart, within the veil. 2. Therefore I commit them to the Father, who has engaged to glorify the Son, and, upon that account, will have a gracious eye to those in whom he is glorified: That, in which God and Christ are glorified, may, with an humble confidence, be committed to God's special care.

¶ And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee, Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. 12. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. 13. And now come I to thee: and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 14. I have given them thy world: and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from evil. 16. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

After the general pleas, with which Christ recommended his disciples to his Father's care, follow the particular petitions he puts up for them; and, 1. They all relate to spiritual blessings in heavenly things: He does not pray that they might be rich and great in the world, that they might raise estates and get preferments, but that they might be kept from sin, and furnished for their duty, and brought safe to heaven. Note, The prosperity of the soul is the best prosperity, for what relates to that, Christ came to purchase and bestow, and so teacheth us to seek, in the first place, both for others and for ourselves. 2. They are such blessings as were suited to their present state and case, and for the exigencies and occasions of that. Note, Christ's intercession is always pertinent: Our advocate with the Father is acquainted with all the particulars of our wants and burdens, our dangers and difficulties, and knows how to accommodate his intercession to each, as to Peter's peril, which he themselves was not aware of, Luke xxii. 32. *I have prayed for thee.* 3. He is large and full in the petitions, orders them before his Father, and fills his mouth with arguments, to teach us fervency and importunity in prayer, to be large in prayer, and dwell upon our errands at the throne of grace, wrestling as Jacob, *I will not let thee go, except thou blest me.*

Now the first thing Christ prays for his disciples, is their preservation, in these verses; in order to which he commits them all to his Father's custody. Keeping supposes danger, and their danger arose from the world, the world wherein they were, the evil of this he begs they might be kept from. Now observe,

First, The request itself: *Keep them from the world.* There were two ways of their being delivered from the world:

(1.) By taking them out of it, and he doth pray that they might be so delivered: *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world; that is,*

1. *I pray not that they may be speedily removed by death.* If the world will be vexatious to them, the readiest way to secure them, would be to hasten them out of it to a better world, that will give them better treatment; send chariots and horses of fire for them, to fetch them to heaven; Job, Elijah, Jonas, and Moses, when that occurred which fretted them, prayed that they might be taken out of the world; but Christ would not pray so for his disciples, for two reasons. (1.) Because he came to conquer, not to countenance those intemperate heats and passions, which make men impatient of life, and importunate for death; it is his will that we should take up our cross, and not outrun it. (2.) Because he had work for them to do in the world; the world, though sick of them, Acts xxii. 22. and therefore not worthy of them, Heb. xi. 33. yet could ill spare them; In pity therefore to this dark world, Christ would not have these lights removed out of it, but continued in it, especially for the sake of those in the world, that were to believe in him through their word. Let not them be taken out of the world, when their master is; they must each, in their own order, die martyrs, but not till they have finished their testimony. Note, 1. The taking of good people out of the world is a thing by no means to be desired, but dreaded rather, and laid to heart, Isa. lvii. 1. 2. Though Christ loves his disciples, he doth not presently send for them to heaven, as soon as they are effectually called, but leaves them for some time in this world, that they may do good and glorify God upon earth, and be ripened for heaven. Many good people are spared to live, because they can ill be spared to die.

2. *I pray not that they may be totally freed and exempted from the troubles of this world, and taken out of the toil and terror of it into some place of ease and safety, there to live undisturbed; that is not the preservation I desire for them: Non ut omni molestia liberati otium & delicias colunt, sed ut inter media pericula salva tamen maneat Dei auxilio; so Calvin.* Not that they may be kept from all conflict with the world, but that they may not be overcome by it, not that, as Jeremiah wished, *leave their people, and go from them, Jer. ix. 2.* but that, like Ezekiel, *their faces may be strong against the faces of wicked men, Ezek. iii. 8.* It is more the honour of a Christian sol-

dier by faith to overcome the world, than by a monastical vow to retreat from it: and more for the honour of Christ to serve him in a city, than to serve him in a cell.

(2.) Another way is by keeping them from the corruption that is in the world; and thus he prays they may be kept, ver. 11, 15. Here are three branches of this petition:

1. *Holy Father, keep those whom thou hast given me.* Christ was now leaving them, but let them not think that their defence was departed from them, no, he doth here in their hearing commit them to the custody of his Father, and their Father. Note, It is the unspeakable comfort of all believers, that Christ himself has committed them to the care of God himself. Those cannot but be safe whom the Almighty God keeps, and he cannot but keep those whom the Son of his love commits to him; in the virtue of which we may by faith, *commit the keeping of our souls to God,* 1 Pet. iv. 19. 2 Tim. i. 12. 1. He here puts them under the divine protection, that they might not be run down by the malice of their enemies; that they, and all their concerns, might be the peculiar care of the divine providence: *Keep their lives, till they have done their work; keep their comforts, and let them not be broken in upon by the hardships they meet with; keep up their interest in the world, and let not that sink.* To this prayer is owing the wonderful preservation of the gospel ministry and gospel church in the world unto this day; if God had not graciously kept both, and kept up both, they had been extinguished and lost long ago. 2. He puts them under the divine tuition, that they might not themselves run away from their duty, or be led aside by the treachery of their own hearts. *Keep them in their integrity, keep them disciples, keep them close to their duty.* We need God's power not only to put us in a state of grace, but to keep us in it. See John x. 28, 29. 1 Pet. i. 5.

The titles he gives to him he prays to, and them he prays for, enforce the petition.

1. He speaks to God as a *holy Father.* In committing ourselves and others to the divine care we may take encouragement. 1. From the attribute of his holiness, for that is engaged for the preservation of his holy ones; he hath sworn by his holiness, Psal. lxxxix. 35. If he be a holy God, and hate sin, he will make those that are his holy, and keep them from sin who hate it too, and dread it as the greatest evil. 2. From this relation of a Father, wherein he stands to us through Christ. If he be a Father he will take care of his own children, will teach them and keep them; who else should?

2. He speaks of them as those whom the Father had given him. What we receive as our Father's gifts we may comfortably remit to our Father's care. Father, keep the graces and comforts thou hast given me; the children thou hast given me; the ministry I have received.

2. Keep them through thine own name. That is, 1. Keep them for thy name's sake; so some. Thy name and honour is concerned in their preservation as well as mine, for both will suffer by it if they either revolt or sink. The Old Testament saints often pleaded, for thy name's sake; and those may with comfort plead it that are indeed more concerned for the honour of God's name than for any interest of their own.

2. Keep them in thy name; so others, the original is so, *in te imparti* keep them in the knowledge and fear of thy name; keep them in the profession and service of thy name whatever it cost them. Keep them in the interest of thy name, and let them ever be faithful to that; keep them in thy truths, in thine ordinances, in the way of thy commandments.

3. Keep them by or through thy name; so others. Keep them by thine own power, in thine own hand; keep them thyself, undertake for them, let them be thine own immediate care. Keep them by those means of preservation which thou hast thyself appointed, and by which thou hast made thyself known. Keep them by thy word and ordinances; let thy name be their strong tower; thy tabernacle, their pavilion.

3. Keep them from the evil; or out of the evil; he had taught them to pray daily deliver us from evil, and this would encourage them to pray.

1. Keep them from the evil one, the devil and all his instruments; that wicked one and all his children. Keep them from Satan as a tempter, that either he may not have leave to sift them or that their faith may not fail. Keep them from him as a destroyer that he may not drive them to despair.

2. Keep them from the evil thing, that is sin, from every thing that looks like it or leads to it. Keep them that they do not evil, 2 Cor. xiii. 7. Sin is that evil which above any other we should dread and deprecate.

3. Keep them from the evil of the world and of their tribulation in it, so that it may have no sting in it, no malignity; not that they might be kept from affliction, but kept through it, that the property of their afflictions might be so altered as that there might be no evil in them, nothing to do them any harm.

Secondly, The reasons with which he enforceth these requests for their preservation, which are five.

1. He pleads that hitherto he had kept them, ver. 12. *While I was with them in the world I have kept them in thy name,* in the true faith of the gospel and the service of God, those that thou gavest me for my constant attendants I have kept, they are all safe and none of them missing, none of them revolted or ruined but the son of perdition; he is lost, that the scripture might be fulfilled. Observe,

1. Christ's faithful discharge of his undertaking concerning his disciples; while he was with them he kept them, and his care concerning them was not in vain. He kept them in God's name, preserved them from falling into any dangerous errors or sins; from striking in with the Pharisees who would have compassed sea and land to make proselytes of them; he kept them from deserting him, and returning to that little all they had left for; he had them still under his eye and care when he sent them to preach, *went not his heart with them?* Many that followed him a while took offence at something or other, and went off, but he kept the twelve that they also should not go away. He kept them from falling into the hands of persecuting enemies that sought their lives; kept them when he surrendered himself, chap. xviii. 9. *While he was with them* he kept them in a visible manner by instructions still sounding in their ears, miracles still done before their eyes; when he was gone from them they must be kept in a more spiritual manner. Sensible comforts and supports are sometimes given and sometimes withheld; but when they are withdrawn, yet they are not less comfortable.

What Christ here saith of his immediate followers is true of all the saints while they are here in this world, Christ keeps them in God's name; it is implied, 1. That they are weak and cannot keep themselves; their own hands are not sufficient for them. 2. That they are in God's account valuable and worth the keeping; precious in his light and honourable; his treasure, his jewels. 3. That their salvation is designed, for to that it is that they are kept, 1 Pet. i. 4. As the wicked are reserved for the day of evil, so the righteous are preserved for the day of bliss. 4. That they are the charge of the Lord Jesus: for his charge he keeps them, and exposed himself like the good shepherd for the preservation of his sheep.

2. The comfortable account he gives of his undertaking. *None of them is lost.* Note, Jesus Christ will certainly keep all that were given him, so as that none of them shall be totally and finally lost; they may think themselves lost and may be near lost, in imminent peril, but it is the Father's will he should

should lose none, and none he will lose, John vi. 39. So it will appear when they come altogether, and none of them shall be wanting.

3. A brand put upon Judas, as none of those whom he had undertaken to keep. He was among those that were given to Christ but not of them. He speaks of Judas as already lost for he had abandoned the society of his master and his fellow-disciples, and abandoned himself to the devil's conduct, and in a little time would go to his own place; he is as good as lost.

But the apostasy and ruin of Judas was no reproach at all to his Master or his family; for,

1. He was the *son of perdition*, and therefore none of those that were given to Christ to be kept. He deserved perdition, and God left him to throw himself headlong into it. He was the *son of the destroyer*, as Cain, who was of that wicked one. That great enmity whom the Lord will consume is called a *son of perdition*, because he is a *man of sin*. 2 Thess. ii. 3. It was an awful consideration that one of the apostles proved a *son of perdition*. No man's place or name in the church; no man's privileges or opportunities of getting grace; no man's profession of external performances will secure him from ruin, if his heart be not right with God; nor any more like to prove *sons of perdition* at last, after a plausible course of profession, than those that like Judas love the bag. But Christ's distinguishing Judas from those that were given him (for a *son* is adverbative not exceptive) intimates that the truth and true religion ought not to suffer for the treachery of those that are false to it, 1 John ii. 19.

2. The scripture was fulfilled; the sin of Judas was foreseen in God's counsel and foretold in his word, and the event would certainly follow after the perdition as a consequent, though it cannot be said necessarily to follow from it as an effect. See *Psalm* xli. 9.—lxix. 25—cix. 8. One would be amazed at the treachery of apostates were we not told it before.

3. He pleads that he was now under a necessity of leaving them, and could no longer watch over them in the way that he had hitherto done it, *ver.* 11. Keep them now that I may not lose the labour I bestowed upon them while I was with them. Keep them that they may be one with us as we are with each other. We shall have occasion to speak of that, *ver.* 21. But see here,

1. With what pleasure he speaks of his own departure. He expresseth himself concerning it with an air of triumph and exultation, with reference both to the world he left and the world he removed to.

(1.) *Now I am no more in the world.* Now farewell to this provoking troublesome world, I have had enough of it, and now the welcome hour is at hand when I shall be no more in it. Now I have finished the work I had to do in it, I have done with it, nothing remains now but to hasten out of it as fast as I can. Note, It should be a pleasure to those that have their home in the other world to think of being no more in this world; for when we have done what we have to do in this world and are made meet for that; what is there here that should court our stay? When we receive a sentence of death within ourselves with what a holy triumph should we say, *now I am no more in this world*, this dark deceitful world, this poor empty world, this tempting desiring world, no more vexed with its thorns and briars, no more endangered by its nets and snares; now I shall wander no more in this howling wilderness, be no more in this stormy sea, *now I am no more in this world*, but can cheerfully quit it and give it a final farewell.

(2.) *Now I come to thee.* To get clear of the world is but the one half of the comfort of a dying Christ, of a dying Christian; the far better half is to think of going to the Father, to sit down in the immediate uninterrupted and everlasting enjoyment of him. Note, They who love God cannot but be pleased to think of coming to him, though it be through the valley of the shadow of death. When we go, to be absent from the body it is to be present with the Lord, like children fetched home from school to their father's house. Now come I to thee whom I have chosen and served, and whom my soul thirsteth after; to thee the fountain of light and life, the crown and centre of bliss and joy; now my longings shall be satisfied, my hopes accomplished, my happiness completed, for *now come I to thee*.

2. With what a tender concern he speaks of those whom he left behind; but these are in the world. I have found what an evil world it is, what will become of these dear little ones that must stay in it? *Holy Father, keep them*; they will want my presence, let them have thine. They have now more need than ever to be kept, for I am sending them out further into the world than they have yet ventured; they must launch forth into the deep and have business to do in these great waters, and will be lost if thou do not keep them. Observe here,

(1.) That when our Lord Jesus was going to the Father he carried with him a tender concern for his own which are in the world; and continued to compassionate them. He bears their names upon his breast-plate, nay upon his heart, and has graven them with the nails of his cross upon the palm of his hands; and when he is out of their sight they are not out of his, much less out of his mind. We should have such a pity for those that are launching out into the world when we are got almost through it; and for those that are left behind in it when we are leaving it.

(2.) That when Christ would express the utmost need his disciples had of divine preservation, he only saith, *they are in the world*; that speaks danger enough to those who are bound for heaven, whom a flattering world would divert and seduce, and a malignant world hate and persecute.

3. He pleads what a satisfaction it would be to him to see them easy; *I speak this that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves*, *ver.* 13. Observe,

1. Christ earnestly desired the *fulness of the joy* of his disciples, for it is his will that they should rejoice evermore. He was leaving them in tears and troubles, and yet took effectual care to fulfil their joy. When they thought their joy in him was brought to an end, then was it advanced nearer to perfection than ever it had been, and they were fuller of it. We are here taught, (1.) To found our joy in Christ, it is my joy, joy of my giving, or rather joy that I am the matter of. Christ is a Christian's joy, his chief joy; joy in the world is withering with it, joy in Christ is everlasting like him. (2.) To build up our joy with diligence; for it is the duty as well as privilege of all true believers; no part of the Christian life is pressed upon us more earnestly, *Phil.* iii. 1—iv. 14. (3.) To aim at the perfection of this joy, that we may have it fulfilled in us, for this Christ would have.

2. In order hereunto he did thus solemnly commit them to his Father's care and keeping, and took them for witnesses that he did so. *The things I speak in the world, while I am yet with them in the world*; his intercession in heaven for their preservation would have been as effectual in itself, but saying this in the world, would be a greater satisfaction and encouragement to them, and would enable them to rejoice in tribulation. Note, 1. Christ has not only treasured up comforts for his people, in providing for their future welfare, but has given out comforts to them, and said that which will be for their present satisfaction. He here condescended in the presence of his disciples to publish his last will and testament, and (which many a testator is shy of) lets them know what legacies he had left them, and how well they were secured, that they might have strong consolation. 2. Christ's intercession for us is enough to fulfil our joy in him; nothing more effectual to silence all our fears and mistrusts, and to furnish us with strong consolation, than this, that

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too always appears in the presence of God for us; therefore the apostle puts a yea rather upon this, *Rom.* viii. 34. And see *Heb.* vii. 25.

4. He pleads the ill usage they were likely to meet with in the world for his sake, *ver.* 14. *I have given them thy word* to be published to the world, and they have received it, have believed it themselves, and accepted the trust of transmitting it to the world, and therefore the world hath hated them, as also because they are not of the world, no more than I. Here we have,

1. The world's enmity to Christ's followers; while Christ was with them, though as yet they had given but little opposition to the world, yet it hates them, much more would it do so when by their more extensive preaching of the gospel they would turn the world upside down. Father, stand their friend, saith Christ, for they are likely to have many enemies; let them have thy love, for the world's hatred is entailed upon them. In the midst of those fiery darts, let them be compassed with thy favour as with a shield; it is God's honour to take part with the weaker side, and to help the helpless. Lord, be merciful to them, for men would swallow them up.

2. The reasons of that enmity which strengthens the plea.

1. It is implied that one reason is because they had received the word of God as it was sent them by the hand of Christ, when the greatest part of the world rejected it, and set themselves against them who were the preachers and professors of it. Note, They that receive Christ's good will and good word, must expect the world's ill will and ill word. Gospel ministers have been in a particular manner hated by the world, because they call men out of the world and separate them from it, and teach them not to conform to it, and so condemn the world. Father, keep them, for it is for thy sake that they are exposed; they are sufferers for thee. Thus the psalmist pleads, for thy sake I have borne reproach, *Psalm* lxxix. 7. Note, Those that keep the word of Christ's patience, are entitled to special protection in the hour of temptation, *Rev.* iii. 10. That cause which makes a martyr, may well make a joyful sufferer.

2. Another reason is more express; the world hates them, because they are not of the world. They to whom the word of Christ comes in power, are not of the world, for it hath this effect upon all that receive it in the love of it, that it weans them from the wealth of the world, and turns them against the wickedness of the world, and therefore the world bears them a grudge.

5. He pleads their conformity to himself in a holy non-conformity to the world, *ver.* 16. Father, keep them, for they are of my spirit and mind, they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. They may in faith commit themselves to God's custody, 1. Who are as Christ was in this world, and tread in his steps. God will love those that are in Christ. 2. Who do not engage themselves in the world's interest, nor devote themselves to its service. Observe,

1. That Jesus Christ was not of this world; he never had been of it, and least of all, now he was upon the point of leaving it. This speaks, 1. His state, he was none of the world's favourites or darlings, none of its princes or grandees, worldly possessions he had none, not where to lay his head; nor worldly power, he was no judge or divider. 2. His spirit; he was perfectly dead to the world, the prince of this world had nothing in him; the things of this world were nothing to him; not honour, for he made himself of no reputation; not riches, for for our sakes he became poor; nor pleasures, for he acquainted himself with grief. See *John* viii. 23.

2. That therefore true Christians are not of this world. The Spirit of Christ in them is opposite to the spirit of the world. 1. It is their lot to be despised by the world; they are not in favour with the world no more than their Master before them was. 2. It is their privilege to be delivered from the world; as Abraham out of the land of his nativity. 3. It is their duty and character to be dead to the world. Their most pleasing converse is, and should be with another world, and their prevailing concern about the business of that world, and not of this. Christ's disciples were weak and had many infirmities, yet this he could say for them, they were not of the world, not of the earth, and therefore he recommends them to the care of Heaven.

17. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. 18. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. 19. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

The next thing he prayed for them was, that they might be sanctified; not only kept from evil, but made good.

First, Here is the petition, *ver.* 17. Sanctify them through thy truth, i. e. through thy words for thy word is truth, it is true, it is truth itself. He desires they may be sanctified both as Christians and as ministers.

(1.) As Christians. Father, make them holy, and that will be their preservation, 1 Thess. v. 23. Observe here,

1. The grace desired; sanctification. The disciples were sanctified for they were not of the world; yet he prays, Father, sanctify them, that is, 1. Confirm the work of sanctification in them, strengthen their faith, inflame their good affections, rivet their good resolutions. 2. Carry on that good work in them and continue it; let the light shine more and more. 3. Complete it, crown it with the perfection of holiness; sanctify them throughout and to the end. Note, 1. It is the prayer of Christ for all that are his, that they may be sanctified; because he cannot for shame own them as his, either here, or hereafter; either employ them in his work, or present them to his Father, if they be not sanctified. 2. Those that through grace are sanctified, have need to be sanctified more and more. Even disciples must pray for sanctifying grace, for if he that was the author of the good work be not the finisher of it, we are undone. Not to go forward is to go backward; he that is holy must be holy still, more holy still, pressing forward, soaring upward, as those that have not attained. 3. It is God that sanctifies as well as God that justifies, *Cor.* v. 5. 4. It is an encouragement to us in our prayers for sanctifying grace, that it is what Christ intercedes for us.

2. The means of conferring this grace, through thy truth, thy word is truth. Not that the holy one of Israel is here limited to means, but in the counsel of peace among other things it was settled and agreed, 1. That all needful truth should be comprised and summed up in the word of God. Divine revelation as it now stands in the written word, is not only pure truth without mixture, but intire truth without deficiency. 2. That this word of truth should be the outward and ordinary means of our sanctification; not of itself, for then it would always sanctify, but as the instrument which the Spirit commonly useth in beginning and carrying on that good work; it is the seed of the new birth, 1 Pet. i. 23. and the food of the new life, 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2.

(2.) As ministers sanctify them, i. e. set them apart for thyself and service; let their call to the apostleship be ratified in heaven. Prophets were said to be sanctified, *Jer.* i. 5. Priests and Levites were so. Sanctify them, i. e. 1. Qualify them for the office, with Christian graces and ministerial gifts, to make them able ministers of the New Testament. 2. Separate them to the office, *Rom.* i. 1. I have called them, they have consented, Father, say Amen to it. 3. Own them in the office; let thy hand go along with them;

sanctify them by or in truth, as truth is opposed to figure and shadow; sanctify them really, not ritually and ceremonially, as the Levitical priests were, by anointing and sacrifice. *Sanctify them to thy truth*, the word of thy truth; to be the preachers of thy truth to the world; as the priests were sanctified to serve at the altar, so let them be to preach the gospel. 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14. Note, 1. Jesus Christ intercedes for his ministers with a particular concern, and recommends to his Father's grace those stars he carries in his right hand. 2. The great things to be asked of God for gospel ministers is, that they may be sanctified, effectually separated from the world, and entirely devoted to God, and experimentally acquainted with the influence of that world upon their own hearts, which they preach to others. Let them have the Urim and Thummim, light and integrity.

Secondly, We have here two pleas or arguments to enforce the petition for the disciples' sanctification.

1. The mission they had from him, *ver. 18. As thou hast sent me into the world to be thine ambassador to the children of men*, so now I am recalled, *have I sent them into the world*, as my delegates. Now here,

(1.) Christ speaks with great assurance of his own mission. *Thou hast sent me into the world*. The great Author of the Christian religion had his commission and instructions from him who is the original and object of all religion. He was sent of God to say what he said, and do what he did, and be what he is to those that believe on him; which was his comfort in his undertaking, and may be ours abundantly, in our dependence upon him; his record was on high, from thence his mission was.

(2.) He speaks with great satisfaction of the commission he had given his disciples. *So have I sent them on the same errand*, and to carry on the same design: to preach the same doctrine that he had preached, and to confirm it with the same proofs, with a charge likewise to commit to other faithful men that which was committed to them. He gave them their commission, John xx. 21. with a reference to his own, and it magnifies their office, that it comes from Christ, and that there is some affinity between the commission given to the ministers of reconciliation, and that given to the Mediator; he is called an apostle, Heb. iii. 1. a minister, Rom. xv. 8. a messenger, Mal. iii. 1. only they are sent as servants, he as a son.

Now this comes in here as a reason, 1. Why Christ was concerned so much for them, and laid their case so near his heart; because he had himself put them into a difficult office, which required great abilities for the due discharge of it. Note, Whom Christ sends he will stand by, and inter-est himself in those that are employed for him; what he calls us out to, he will fit us out for, and bear us out in. 2. Why he committed them to his Father, because he was concerned in the cause; their mission being in prosecution of his, and as it were an assignment out of it. Christ received gifts of men, Psal. lxxviii. 19. and then gave them to men, Eph. iv. 8. and therefore prays in aid of his Father to warrant and uphold those gifts, and confirm his grant of them. The Father sanctified him when he sent him into the world, chap. x. 36. Now they being sent as he was, let them also be sanctified.

2. The merit he had for them is another thing here pleaded, *ver. 19. For their sakes I sanctify myself*. Here is,

1. Christ's designation of himself to the work and office of mediator, *I sanctify myself*, i. e. he entirely devoted himself to the undertaking, and all the parts of it, especially that which he was now going about, the offering up of himself without spot to God, by the eternal Spirit. He as the priest and altar sanctified himself as the sacrifice. When he said Father, glorify thy name; and Father, thy will be done; and Father, I commit my spirit into thy hands; he paid down the satisfaction he had engaged to make, and so sanctified himself. This he pleads with the Father, for his intercession is made in the virtue of his satisfaction, by his own blood he entered into the holy place, Heb. xi. 12. As the high-priest on the day of atonement sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice at the same time that he burnt incense within the veil, Lev. xvi. 12, 14.

2. Christ's design of kindness to his disciples herein. It is for their sakes, that they may be sanctified, that is, that they may be martyrs, so some. I sacrifice myself, that they may be sacrificed to the glory of God and the church's good. Paul speaks of his being offered, 2 Tim. iv. 6. Phil. ii. 17. Whatever there is in the death of the saints, that is precious in the sight of the Lord, it is owing to the death of the Lord Jesus. But I rather take it more generally, that they may be saints and ministers duly qualified and accepted of God.

1. The office of the ministry, is the purchase of Christ's blood, and one of the blessed fruits of his satisfaction, and owes its virtue and value to Christ's merit. The priests under the law were consecrated with the blood of bulls and goats, but gospel ministers with the blood of Jesus.

2. The real holiness of all good Christians is the fruit of Christ's death, by which the gift of the Holy Ghost was purchased; he gave himself for his church to sanctify it, Eph. v. 26. And he that designed the end, designed also the means, that they might be sanctified by the truth, the truth which Christ came into the world to bear witness to, and died to confirm. The word of truth receives its sanctifying virtue and power from the death of Christ. Some read it, that they may be sanctified in truth, i. e. truly; for as God must be served, so in order to that we must be sanctified in the spirit, and in truth. And this Christ has prayed for, for all that are his; for this is his will, even their sanctification, which encourages them to pray for it.

20. ¶ Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;
21. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.
22. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:
23. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Next to their purity he prays for their unity, for the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable; and amity is then amiable indeed, when it is like the ointment on Aaron's holy head, and the dew on Zion's holy hill. Observe,

First, Who are included in this prayer, *ver. 20. not these only*, not these only that are now my disciples, the eleven, the seventy, with others; men and women that followed him when he was here on earth, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, either preached by them in their own day, or written by them for the generations to come; I pray for them all, that they all may be one in their interest in their prayer, and may all receive benefit by it. Note here,

1. Those, and these only are interested in the mediation of Christ, that do, or shall believe in him. This is that by which they are described, and it comprehends all the character and duty of a Christian. They that lived then *saw and believed*, but they in after ages have not seen, and yet have believed.

2. It is through the word that souls are brought to believe on Christ, and it is for this end that Christ appointed the scriptures to be written, and a standing ministry to continue in the church, while the church stands, that is, while the world stands, for the raising up of a seed.

3. It is certainly and infallibly known to Christ who shall believe on him. He doth not here play at a venture, upon a contingency depending on the treacherous will of man, which pretends to be free, but by reason of sin is in bondage with its children; no, Christ knew very well whom he prayed for, the matter was reduced to a certainty by the divine prescience and purpose; he knew who were given him, who being ordained to eternal life were entered in the Lamb's book, and should undoubtedly believe, Acts xiii. 48.

4. Jesus Christ intercedes not only for great and eminent believers, but for the meanest and weakest; not for these only that are to be employed in the highest posts of trust and honour in his kingdom, but for all, even those that in the eye of the world are inconsiderable. As the divine providence extends itself to the meanest creature, so doth the divine grace to the meanest Christian. The good shepherd has an eye even to the poor of the flock.

5. Jesus Christ in his mediation had an actual regard to those of the chosen remnant that were yet unborn, the people that should be created, Psal. xxii. 13. the other sheep which he must yet bring. Before they are formed in the womb he knows them, Jer. i. 5. and prayers are filed in heaven for them beforehand, by him who declareth the end from the beginning, and calleth things that were not as though they were.

Secondly, What is intended in this prayer, *ver. 21. That they all may be one*. The same before, *ver. 11. That they may be one as we are*. And again, *ver. 22. The heart of Christ was much upon this*. Some think that oneness prayed for, *ver. 11.* hath special reference to the disciples as ministers and apostles, that they might be one in their testimony to Christ; and the harmony of the evangelists, and concurrence of the first preachers of the gospel, is owing to this prayer. Let them not only be of one heart, but one mouth, speaking the same thing. The unity of gospel ministers is both the beauty and strength of the gospel interest.

But it is certain the oneness prayed for, *ver. 21.* respects all believers. It is the prayer of Christ for all that are his, and we may be sure it is an answered prayer. That they all may be one, one in us, *ver. 21. one as we are one*, *ver. 22. made perfect in one*, *ver. 23.* It includes three things,

1. That they might all be incorporated in one body. Father, look upon them all as one, and ratify that great charter by which they are embodied as one church. Though they live in distant places, from one end of heaven to the other, and in several ages, from the beginning to the close of time, and so cannot have any personal acquaintance or correspondence with each other, yet let them be united in me their common head. As Christ died, so he prayed to gather them all in one, John xi. 53. Eph. i. 10.

2. That they might all be animated by one Spirit. This is plainly implied in that, that they might be one in us. Union with the Father and Son is obtained and kept up only by the Holy Ghost. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17. Let them all be stamped with the same image and superscription, and influenced by the same power.

3. That they might all be knit together in the bond of love and charity, all of one heart. That they all may be one. 1. In judgment and sentiment, not in every little thing, it is neither possible nor needful, but in the great things of God, and in them by the virtue of his prayer they are all agreed; that God's favour is better than life; that sin is the worst of evils, Christ the best of friends; that there is another life after this; and the like. 2. In disposition and inclination. All that are sanctified have the same divine nature and image; they have all a new heart, and it is one heart. 3. They are all one in their designs and aims. Every true Christian, as far as he is so, eyes the glory of God as his highest end, and the glory of heaven as his chief good. 4. They are all one in their desires and prayers, though they differ in words and the manner of expressions, yet having all received the same Spirit of adoption, and observing the same rule, they pray for the same things in effect. 5. All one in love and affection. Every true Christian has that in him which inclines him to love all true Christians as such. That which Christ here prays for, is that communion of saints which we profess to believe; the fellowship which all believers have with God, and their intimate union with all the saints in heaven and earth, 1 John i. 3. But this prayer of Christ will not have its complete answer till all the saints come to heaven, for then, and not till then, they shall be perfect in one, *ver. 23.* Eph. iv. 13.

Thirdly, What is intimated by way of plea or argument to enforce this petition; three things,

(1.) The oneness that is between the Father and the Son, which is mentioned again and again, *ver. 11, 21, 22, 23.*

1. It is taken for granted, that the Father and Son are one, one in nature and essence, equal in power and glory, one in mutual endearments: The Father loveth the Son, and the Son always pleased the Father. They are one in design, and one in operation. The intimacy of this oneness is expressed in these words, *thou in me, and I in thee*. This he often mentions for his support under his present sufferings, when his enemies were ready to fall upon him, and his friends to fall off from him, yet he was in the Father, and the Father in him.

2. This is insisted on in Christ's prayer for his disciples' oneness.

1. As the pattern of that oneness, shewing how he desired they might be one. Believers are one in some measure as God and Christ are one; for, (1.) The union of believers is a strict and close union; they are united by a divine nature, by the power of divine grace in pursuance of the divine counsels. (2.) It is a holy union, in the holy Spirit, for holy ends; not a body politic for any secular purpose. (1.) It is, and will be at last a complete union. Father and Son have the same attributes, properties, and perfections, so have believers now, as far as they are sanctified, and when grace shall be perfected in glory, they will be exactly consonant to each other, all changed into the same image.

2. As the centre of that oneness; that they may be one in us, all meeting here. There is one God and one Mediator, and herein believers are one, that they all agree to depend upon the favour of this one God as their felicity, and the merit of this one Mediator as their righteousness. That is a conspiracy, not a union, which doth not centre in God as the end, and Christ as the way. All that are truly united to God and Christ, who are one, will soon be united one to another.

3. As a plea for that oneness. The Creator and Redeemer are one in interest and design; but to what purpose are they so, if all believers were not one body with Christ, and did not jointly receive grace for grace from him, as he had received for them? Christ's design was to reduce revolted mankind to God; Father, faith he, let all that believe be one, that in one body

body they may be reconciled, *Eph. ii. 15, 16.* which speaks of the uniting Jews and Gentiles in the church; that great mystery, that the Gentiles should be *fellows heirs, and of the same body*, *Eph. iii. 6.* to which I think this prayer of Christ principally refers, it being one great thing he aimed at in his dying; and I wonder none of the expositors I have met with do so apply it. Father, let the Gentiles that believe be incorporated with the believing Jews, and make of twain one new man.

Those words, *I in them, and thou in me*, shew what that union is which is so necessary, not only to the beauty, but to the very being of his church. 1. *Union with Christ, I in them.* Christ dwelling in the hearts of believers, is the life and soul of the new man. 2. *Union with God through him. Thou in me*, so as by me to be in them. 3. *Union with each other*, resulting from those, that they hereby may be made perfect in one. We are complete in him.

2. The design of Christ in all his communications of light and grace to them. *Ver. 22. The glory which thou gavest me*, as the trustee or channel of conveyance, *I have accordingly given them*, to this intent, that they may be one, as we are one; so that those gifts will be vain, if they be not one. Now these gifts are either,

1. Those that were conferred upon the apostles, and first planters of the church. The glory of being God's ambassadors to the world; the glory of working miracles; the glory of gathering a church out of the world, and erecting the throne of God's kingdom among men; this glory was given to Christ, and some of the honour he put upon them when he sent them to disciple all nations.

Or, 2. Those that are given in common to all believers. The glory of being in covenant with the Father, and accepted of him; of being laid in his bosom, and designed for a place at his right hand, was the glory which the Father gave to the Redeemer, and he hath confirmed it to the Redeemed. 1. This honour he saith he hath given them, because he hath intended it for them, settled it upon them, and secured it to them upon their believing Christ's promises are real gifts. 2. This was given him to give them; it was conveyed to him in trust for them, and he was faithful to him that appointed him. 3. He gave it them that they might be one. 1. To entitle them to the privilege of unity, that by virtue of their common relation to one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ, they might truly be denominated one. The gift of the Spirit, that great glory which the Father gave to the Son, by him to be given to all believers, makes them one, for he worketh all in all, *1 Cor. xii. 4, &c.* 2. To engage them to the duty of unity. That in consideration of their agreement and communion in one creed and one covenant, one Spirit and one Bible; in consideration of what they have in one God and one Christ, and of what they hope for in one heaven, they may be of one mind and one mouth. Worldly glory sets men at variance, for if some be advanced, others are eclipsed, and therefore while the disciples dreamed of a temporal kingdom, they were ever and anon quarrelling, but spiritual honours being conferred alike upon all Christ's subjects, they being all made to our God kings and priests, there is no occasion for contest or emulation. The more Christians are taken up with the glory Christ has given them, the less desirous they will be of vain-glory, and consequently the less disposed to quarrel.

3. He pleads the happy influence their oneness would have upon others, and the furtherance it would give to the public good. This is twice urged, *ver. 21. That the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* And again, *ver. 23. That the world may know it*, for without knowledge there can be no true faith. Believers must know what they believe, and why and wherefore they believe it: They who believe at a venture, venture too far. Now Christ here shews,

1. His good will to the world of mankind in general. Herein he is of his Father's mind, as we are sure he is in every thing, that he would have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, *1 Tim. ii. 4.* *2 Pet. iii. 9.* Therefore it is his will that all means possible should be used, and no stone left unturned for the conviction and conversion of the world. We know not who are chosen, but we must in our places do our utmost to further men's salvation, and take heed of doing any thing to hinder it.

2. The good fruit of the church's oneness; it will be an evidence of the truth of Christianity, and a means of bringing many to embrace it. 1. In general, it will recommend Christianity to the world and to the good opinion of those that are without.

(1.) The embodying of Christians in one society by the gospel charter, will greatly promote Christianity, when the world shall see so many of those that were its children, called out of its family, distinguished from others, and changed from what they themselves sometimes were; when they shall see this society raised by the foolishness of preaching, and kept up by miracles of divine providence and grace; and how admirably well it is modelled and constituted, they will be ready to say, *we will go with you, for we see that God is with you.*

(2.) The uniting of Christians in love and charity is the beauty of their profession, and invites others to join with them, as the love that was among those primo-primitive Christians, *Acts ii. 42, 43.*—*iv. 32, 33.* When Christianity, instead of causing quarrels about itself, makes all other strifes to cease, when it cools the fiery, smooths the rugged, and disposeth men to be kind and loving, courteous and beneficent to all men; studious to preserve and promote peace in all relations and societies; this will recommend it to all that have any thing either of natural religion or natural affection in them.

2. In particular it will beget in men good thoughts,

1. Of Christ. They will know and believe that thou hast sent me. By this it will appear that Christ was sent of God, and that his doctrine was divine, in that his religion prevails to join so many of different capacities, tempers and interests in other things, in one body by faith, with one heart by love: Certainly he was sent by the God of power, who fashioneth men's hearts alike, and the God of love and peace; when the worshippers of God are one, he is one, and his name one.

2. Of Christians. They will know that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me. Here is, 1. The privilege of believers, the Father himself loveth them with a love resembling his love to his Son, for they all loved in him with an everlasting love. 2. The evidence of their interest in this privilege, and that is, their being one. By this it will appear that God loves us, if we love one another with a pure heart; for wherever the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, it will change it into the same image. See how much good it would do to the world, to know better how dear to God all good Christians are! The Jews had a saying, *If the world did but know the worth of good men, they would hedge them about with pearls.* Those that have so much of God's love, shall have no more of ours.

24. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. 25. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but

I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. 26. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Here is, First, A petition for the glorifying all those that were given to Christ, *ver. 24.* not only these apostles but all believers; *Father, I will that they may be with me.* Observe,

1. The connection of this request with those foregoing. He had prayed that God would preserve, sanctify, and unite them; and now he prays that he would crown all his gifts with their glorification. In this method we must pray, first for grace, and then for glory, *Psal. lxxxiv. 11.* for in this method God gives. Far be it from the only wise God to come under the imputation, either of that foolish builder, that, without a foundation, built upon the sand; as he would, if he should glorify any, whom he has not first sanctified; or, of that foolish builder, who began to build, and was not able to finish, as he would, if he should sanctify any, and not glorify them.

2. The manner of the request, *Father, I will.* Here, as before, he addresseth himself to God as a Father, and therein we must do likewise; but when he saith, *My Father, I will*, he speaks a language peculiar to himself, and such as doth not become ordinary petitioners, but very well become him who paid for what he prayed for.

(1.) It speaks the authority of his intercession in general; his word was with power in heaven, as well as on earth: He entering with his own blood into the holy place, his intercession there has an unaccountable efficacy: He intercedes as a king, for he is a priest upon his throne, like Melchizedek, a king-priest.

(2.) It speaks his particular authority in this matter: he had a power to give his eternal life, *ver. 2.* and, pursuant to that power, he saith, *Father, I will.* Though now he took upon him the form of a servant, yet that power being to be most illustriously exerted when he shall come the second time in the glory of a judge, to say, *Come ye blessed*, having that in his eye, he might well say, *Father, I will.*

3. The request itself, that all the elect might come to be with him in heaven at last, to see his glory, and to share in it. Now, observe here,

(1.) Under what nation we are to hope for heaven; wherein doth that happiness consist: three things make heaven:

1. It is to be where Christ is, where I am; in the paradise, whither Christ's soul went at death; in the third heavens, where his soul and body went at his ascension:—Where I am, am to be shortly, am to be eternally: In this world we are but in transitu, there we truly are where we are to be for ever; so Christ reckoned, and so must we.

2. It is to be with him where he is: this is no tautology, but intimates, that we shall not only be in the same happy place where Christ is, but that the happiness of the place will consist in his presence, that is the fulness of his joy: The very heaven of heavens is to be with Christ, there in company with him, and communion with him, *Phil. i. 11.*

3. It is to behold his glory, which the Father has given him. Observe, (1.) The glory of the Redeemer is the brightness of heaven: That glory, before which angels cover their faces, was his glory, *John xii. 1.* The Lamb is the light of the new Jerusalem, *Rev. xxi. 23.* Christ will come in the glory of his Father, for he is the brightness of his glory; God shews his glory there, as he doth his grace here, through Christ. The Father has given me this glory, though he was as yet in his low estate: but it was very sure, and very near.

(2.) The felicity of the Redeemer consists very much in the beholding of that glory: they will have the immediate view of his glorious person; *I shall see God in my flesh*, *Job xix. 26, 27.* They will have a clear insight into his glorious undertaking, as it will be then accomplished; they will see into those springs of love, from whence flow all the springs of grace; they shall have an appropriating sight of Christ's glory. *Uxor fulget radiis mariti*, and an assimilating sight: they shall be changed into the same image, from glory to glory.

(3.) Upon what ground we are to hope for heaven; no other but purely the mediation and intercession of Christ, because he hath said, *Father, I will.* Our sanctification is our evidence, for he that hath this hope in him, purifies himself; but it is the will of Christ, that is our title, by the which will we are sanctified, *1 Heb. x. 10.* Christ speaks here, as if he did not count his own happiness complete unless he had his elect to share with him in it, for it is the bringing of many sons to glory that makes the captain of our salvation perfect, *1 Heb. x. 10.*

4. The argument to back this request, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world: This is a reason, 1. Why he expected this glory himself; thou wilt give it me, for thou lovedst me. The honour and power given to the Son as mediator, was founded in the Father's love to him, *John v. 20.* The Father loves the Son, is infinitely well pleased in his undertaking, and therefore has given all things into his hand; and the matter being concerted in the divine councils from eternity, he is said to love him as mediator before the foundation of the world. Or, 2. Why he expected that those who were given him should be with him to share in his glory. Thou lovedst me, and them in me, and canst deny me nothing I ask for them.

Secondly, The conclusion of the prayer, which is designed to enforce all the petitions for the disciples, especially the last, that they may be glorified.

Two things he insists upon, and pleads:

(1.) The respect he had to his Father, *ver. 25.* Observe,

1. The titles he gives to God, O righteous Father. When he prayed they might be sanctified, he calls him holy Father; when he prays they might be glorified, he calls him righteous Father; for it is a crown of righteousness which the righteous Judge shall give. God's righteousness was engaged for the giving out all that good which the Father had promised, and the Son had purchased.

2. The character he gives of the world that lay in wickedness: The world has not known thee. Note, Ignorance of God overspreads the world of mankind; that is the darkness they sit in. Now this is urged here, 1. To shew that these disciples needed the aids of special grace, both because of the necessity of their work, they were to bring a world that knew not God to the knowledge of him; and also because of the difficulty of their work, they must bring light to those that rebelled against the light, therefore keep them. 2. To shew that they were qualified for further particular favours, for they had that knowledge of God which the world had not.

2. The plea he insists upon for himself, but I have known thee. Christ knew the Father so as no one else ever did; knew upon what grounds he went in his undertaking, knew his Father's mind in every thing, and therefore, in this prayer, came to him with confidence, as we do to one we know. Christ is here suing out blessings for those that were his; pursuing this petition, when he had said, *The world has not known me*, one would expect it should follow, *but they have known thee*: no, their knowledge was not to be bragged of, but I have known thee; which intimates that there is nothing in us to recommend us to God's favour, but all our interest in him

him, and intercourse with him, resorts from, and depends upon Christ's interest and intercourse: We are unworthy, but he is worthy.

4. The plea he insists upon for his disciples, *and they have known that thou hast sent me*: and,

(1.) Hereby they are distinguished from the unbelieving world. When multitudes, to whom Christ was sent, and his grace offered, would not believe that God had sent him, *these knew it, and believed it*, and were not ashamed to own it. Note, To know and believe in Jesus Christ, in the midst of a world that persists in ignorance and infidelity, is highly pleasing to God, and should certainly be crowned with distinguishing glory: Singular faith qualifies for singular favours.

(2.) Hereby they are interested in the mediation of Christ, and partake of the benefit of his acquaintance with the Father: *I have known thee*, immediately and perfectly; and those, though they have not so known thee, nor were capable of knowing thee so, yet *they have known that thou hast sent me*, have known that which was required of them to know, have known the Creator in the Redeemer. Knowing Christ as *sent of God*, they have, in him, known the Father, and are introduced to an acquaintance with him; therefore, Father, look after them for my sake.

(3.) The respect he had to his disciples, *ver. 26*. I have led them into the knowledge of thee, and will do it yet more and more; with this great and kind intention, *that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them*. Observe here,

1. What Christ had done for them: *I have declared unto them thy name*.

(1.) This he had done for those that were his immediate followers; *All the time that he went in and out among them*, he made it his business to declare his Father's name to them, and to beget in them a veneration for it: The tendency of all his sermons and miracles was to advance his Father's honour, and to spread the knowledge of him, *John i. 18*. (2.) This he had done for all that believe on him; for they had not been brought to believe, if Christ had not made known to them his Father's name. Note, 1. We are indebted to Christ for all the knowledge we have of the Father's name, he declares it, and he opens the understanding to receive that revelation. 2. Those whom Christ recommends to the favour of God, he first leads into an acquaintance with God.

2. What he intended to do yet further for them; *I will declare it*. To the disciples he designed to give further instruction after his resurrection, *Acts i. 3*, and to bring them into a much more intimate acquaintance with divine things, by the pouring out of the Spirit after his ascension; and to all believers, into whose hearts he hath shined, he shines more and more. Where Christ has declared his Father's name, *he will declare it*; for to him *that hath shall be given*; and they that know God, both need and desire to know more of him. This is fitly pleaded for them, Father, own and favour them, for they own and honour thee.

3. What he aimed at in all this; not to fill their heads with curious speculations and furnish them with something to talk of among the learned, but to secure and advance their real happiness in two things:

(1.) Communion with God: Therefore I have given them the knowledge of that nature, of all that whereby thou hast made thyself known, *that thy love, even that wherewith thou hast loved me, may be*, not only towards them, but in them; that is, 1. Let them have the fruits of that love for their satisfaction; let the Spirit of love, with which thou hast filled me, *be in me*, Christ declares his Father's name to believers, that with that divine light darted into their minds, a divine love may be shed abroad in their hearts, to be in them a commanding, constraining principle of holiness, that they may partake of a divine nature. When God's love to us comes to be in us, it is like the virtue which the loadstone gives the needle, inclining it to move towards the pole; it draws out the soul towards God, in pious and devout affections, which are as the spirits of the divine life in the soul. 2. Let them have the taste and relish of that love for their consolation; let them not only be interested in the love of God, by having God's name declared to them, but, by a further declaration of it, let them have the comfort of that interest; may not only know God, but know that they know him, *1 John ii. 3*. It is the love of God thus shed abroad in the heart that fills it with joy. *Rom. v. 3-5*. This God has provided for, that we may not only be satisfied with his loving kindness, but satisfied of it; and so may live a life of complacency in God, and communion with him; this we must pray for, this we must press after; if we have it, we must thank Christ for it; if we want it, we may thank ourselves.

(2.) Union with Christ in order hereunto, *and I in them*. There is no getting into the love of God but through Christ, nor can we keep ourselves in that love but by abiding in Christ, that is, having him to abide in us; nor can we have the sense and apprehension of that love, but by our experience of the in-dwelling of Christ, that is, the Spirit of Christ in our hearts; It is Christ in us that is the only hope of glory, that will not make us ashamed, *Col. i. 27*. All our communion with God, the reception of his love to us, and our return of love to him again, passeth through the hands of the Lord Jesus, and the comfort of both is entirely purely to him. Christ had said but a little before, *I in them*, *ver. 23*, and here it is repeated again (though the sense was complete without it) and the prayer closed with it, to shew how much the heart of Christ was set upon it: all his petitions centre in this, and with this the prayers of Jesus, the Son of David, are ended: *I in them*; let me have this, and I desire no more; it is the glory of the Redeemer to dwell in the redeemed; it is his rest for ever, and he has desired it. Let us therefore make sure of our union with Christ, and then take the comfort of his intercession: This prayer had an end, but that he ever lives to make.

C H A P. XVIII.

Hitherto this evangelist has recorded little of the history of Christ, only so far as was requisite to introduce his discourses, but now the time drew nigh that Jesus must die, he is very particular in relating the circumstances of his sufferings, and some which the others had omitted, especially his sayings. So far was his followers from being ashamed of his cross, or endeavouring to conceal it, that this was it which, both by word and writing, they were most industrious to proclaim, and gloried in it. This chapter relates, 1. How Christ was arrested in the garden, and surrendered himself a prisoner, *ver. 1-12*. 2. How he was abused in the High Priest's court, and how Peter, in the mean time, denied him, *ver. 13-37*. How he was prosecuted before Pilate, and examined by him, and put in election with Barabbas for the favour of the people, and lost it, *ver. 38-40*.

1. WHEN Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples. 2. And Judas also which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oft-times resorted

thither with his disciples. Judas then having received a band of men, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns, and torches, and weapons. 4. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? 5. They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. 6. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. 7. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. 8. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: 9. That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me I have lost none. 10. Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. 11. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? 12. Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus and bound him.

The hour was now come that the captain of our salvation, who was to be made perfect by sufferings, should engage the enemy. We have here his entrance upon the encounter. The day of recompence is in his heart, and the year of his redeemed is come, and his own arm works the salvation, for he has no second. Let us turn aside now and see this great fight.

First, Our Lord Jesus, like a bold champion, takes the field first, *ver. 1*. 2. When he had spoken these words, preached the sermon, prayed his prayer, and so finished his testimony, he would lose no time, but went forth immediately out of the house, out of the city, by moon-light, for the passover was observed at the full moon, with his disciples, (the eleven, for Judas was otherwise employed, and he went over the brook Cedron, which runs between Jerusalem and the mount of Olives, where was a garden, not of his own, but some friend's, who allowed him the liberty of it. Observe,

1. That our Lord Jesus entered upon his sufferings when he had spoken these words, *as Matt. xxvi. 1*. When he had finished these sayings. Here it is intimated,

(1.) That our Lord Jesus took his work before him. The office of the priest was to teach and pray, and offer sacrifice: Christ, after teaching and praying, applies himself to make atonement. Christ had said all he had to say as a prophet, and now he addresseth himself to the discharge of his office as a priest, to make his soul an offering for sin; and when he had gone through that, he entered upon his kingly office.

(2.) That having by his sermon prepared his disciples for this hour of trial, and by his prayer prepared himself for it, he then courageously went out to meet it: When he had put on his armour, he entered the lists, and not till then. Let those that suffer according to the will of God, in a good cause, with a good conscience, and having a clear call to it, comfort themselves with this, that Christ will not engage those that are his in any conflict, but he will first do that for him which is necessary to prepare them for it; and if we receive Christ's instructions and comforts, and be interested in his intercession, we may, with an unshaken resolution, venture through the greatest hardships in the way of duty.

(3.) That he went forth with his disciples. Judas knew what house he was in in the city, and he could have stayed and met his sufferings there; but,

(1.) He would do as he was wont to do, and not alter his method, either to meet the cross or to miss it, when his hour was come. It was his custom when he was at Jerusalem, after he had spent the day in public work, to retire at night to the mount of Olives, there his quarters were, in the skirts of the city, for they would not make room for him in palaces, in the heart of the town. This being his custom, he would not be put out of his method by the foresight of his sufferings, but, as Daniel, did then just as he did aforesaid, *Dan. vi. 10*.

(2.) He was as unwilling there should be an uproar among the people, as his enemies were, for it was not his way to strive or cry. If he had been seized in the city, and a tumult raised thereby, mischief might have been done, and a deal of blood shed, and therefore he withdrew. Note, When we find ourselves involved in trouble, we should be afraid of involving others with us. It is no disgrace to the followers of Christ to fall tamely. They who aim at honour from men, value themselves upon a resolution to sell their lives as dear as they can: but they who know their blood is precious to Christ, and not a drop of it shall be shed but upon a valuable consideration, need not stand upon such.

(3.) He would set us an example in the beginning of his passion, as he did at the end of it, of retirement from the world. Let us go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach, *Heb. xiii. 13*. We must lay aside, and leave behind, the crowds, and cares, and comforts of cities, even holy cities, if we would cheerfully take up our cross, and keep up our communion with God therein.

3. That he went over the brook Cedron; he must go over that to go to the mount of Olives; but the notice taken of it intimates that there was something in it significant: and it points, 1. At David's prophecy concerning the Messiah, *Psal. cx. 7*. that he should drink of the brook in the way: the brook of suffering in his way to his glory and our salvation, signified by the brook Cedron; the black brook, so called either from the darkness of the valley it run through, or the colour of the water, tainted with the dirt of the city, such a brook Christ drank of, when it lay in the way of our redemption, and therefore shall he lift up the head, his own and ours. 2. At David's parting as a type of the Messiah; in his flight from Achish, particular notice is taken of his passage over the brook Cedron, and going up by the ascent of mount Olivet weeping, and all that were with him in tears too, *2 Sam. xv. 23-30*. The Son of David being driven out by the rebellious Jews, who would not have him to reign over them, and Judas-like Ahitophel, being in the plot against him, passed over the brook in meanness and humiliation, attended by a company of true mourners. The godly kings of Judah had burnt and destroyed the idols they found at the brook Cedron, *2 Chron. xv. 16*. Hezekiah, *2 Chron. xxx. 14*. Josiah, *2 Kings xxiii. 4-6*. into that brook the abominable things were cast. Christ being now made sin for us, that he might abolish it and take it away, began his passion by the same brook. Mount Olivet, where Christ began his sufferings, lay on the east side of Jerusalem;

Jerusalem; mount Calvary, where he finished them, on the west; for in them he had an eye to such as should come from the east and from the west.

4. That he entered into a garden. This circumstance is taken notice of only by this evangelist, that Christ's sufferings began in a garden. In the garden of Eden sin began, there the curse was pronounced, there the Redeemer was promised; and therefore in a garden that promised seed entered the lists with the old serpent: Christ was buried also in a garden. 1. Let us when we walk in our gardens take occasion from thence to meditate on Christ's sufferings in a garden, to which we owe all the pleasure we have in our gardens; for by them the cause upon the ground for man's sake was removed. 2. When we are in the midst of our possessions and enjoyments, we must keep up an expectation of troubles, for our gardens of delight are in a vale of tears.

5. That he had his disciples with him. 1. Because he used to take them with him when he retired for prayer. 2. They must be witnesses of his sufferings and his patience under them, that they might with the more assurance and affection, preach them to the world, Luke xxiv. 48. and be prepared to suffer themselves. 3. He would take them into the danger to shew them their weakness, notwithstanding the promises they had made of fidelity. Christ sometimes brings his people into difficulties, that he may magnify himself in their deliverance.

6. That Judas the traitor knew the place, knew it to be the place of his usual retirement; and by some word Christ had dropped, probably knew that he intended to be there that night, for want of a better closet. A solitary garden is a proper place for meditation and prayer, and after a pass-over, a proper time to retire for private devotion, that we may pray over the impressions made, and the vows renewed, and clench the nail.

Mention is made of Judas's knowing the place.

(1.) To aggravate the sin of Judas, that he would betray his Master, notwithstanding the intimate acquaintance he had with him; nay, and that he would make use of his familiarity with Christ, as giving him an opportunity of betraying him; a generous mind would have scorned to base a thing! Thus both Christ's holy religion been wounded in the house of its friends, so as it could not have been wounded any where else. Many an apostate could not have been so profane as he is, if he had not been a professor; could not have ridiculed scriptures and ordinances, if he had not known them.

(2.) To magnify the love of Christ, that though he knew where the traitor would seek him, thither he went to be found of him, now he knew that his hour was come. Thus he shewed himself willing to suffer and die for us: What he did was not by constraint, but by consent; though as a man he said, *Let this cup pass away*; as mediator he said, *Lo, I come*; I come with a good will. It was late in the night, we may suppose it eight or nine o'clock, when Christ went out to the garden; for it was not only his meat and drink, but his rest and sleep, to do the will of him that sent him: When others were going to bed he was going to pray, going to suffer.

Secondly, The captain of our salvation having taken the field, the enemy presently comes upon the spot and attacks him, ver. 2. Judas with his men comes thither, commissioned by the chief priests, especially those among them that were Pharisees, who were the most bitter enemies to Christ. This evangelist passeth over Christ's agony, because the other three had fully related it, and presently introduceth Judas and his company that came to seize him. Observe,

(1.) The persons employed in this action, a band of men and officers from the chief priests with Judas.

Here is a multitude engaged against Christ, a band of men, *ὄχλος*, cohorts, a regiment, a Roman band, which some think was five hundred men, others a thousand. Christ's friends were few, his enemies many. Let us therefore not follow a multitude to do evil, nor fear a multitude designing evil to us, if God be for us.

2. Herein is a mixed multitude; the band of men were Gentiles, Roman soldiers; a detachment out of the guards that were posted in the tower of Antonia, to be a curb upon the city; the officers of the chief priests, *ἱερείας*, either their domestic servants, or the officers of their courts were Jews; these had animosity to each other, but were united against Christ, who came to reconcile both to God in one body.

3. It is a commissioned multitude, not a popular tumult; no, they have received orders from the chief priests, upon whose suggestion to the governor that this Jesus was a dangerous man, it is likely they had a warrant from him too to take him up, for they feared the people. See what enemies Christ and his gospel has had, and are likely to have, numerous and potent, and therefore formidable: Ecclesiastical and civil powers combined against them, Psalm ii. 1, 2. Christ said it would be so, Matt. x. 18. and found it so.

All under the conduct of Judas; he received this band of men, it is likely he desired it, telling them how necessary it was to send a good force, and being as ambitious of the honour of commanding in chief in this expedition, as he was covetous of the wages of this unrighteousness: He thought himself bravely preferred from coming in the rear of the contemptible twelve, to be placed in the head of these formidable hundreds; he never made such a figure before, and promised himself perhaps, that this should not be the last time, but he should be rewarded with a captain's commission, or better, if he succeeded well in this enterprise.

(2.) The preparation they had made for an attack; they came with lanterns, and torches, and weapons.

1. If he should abscond, though they have moon-light, they would have occasion for their lights; but they might have spared these; the second Adam was not driven, as the first was, to hide himself; either for fear of shame, among the trees of the garden: It was folly to light a candle to seek the sun by.

2. If he should resist, they would have occasion for their arms; the weapons of his warfare were spiritual, and at those weapons he had often beat them and put them to silence, and therefore they have now recourse to other weapons, swords and staves.

Thirdly, Our Lord Jesus gloriously repulsed the first onset of the enemy, ver. 4, 5, 6. where observe,

1. How he received them with all the mildness imaginable towards them, and all the calmness imaginable in himself.

(1.) He met them with a very soft and mild question, ver. 4. *Knowing all things that should come upon him*, and therefore not at all surprised with this alarm, with a wonderful intrepidity and presence of mind, undisturbed and undaunted, he went forth to meet them, and as if he had been unconcerned, softly asked, *Whom seek ye?* What is the matter? What means this bustle at this time of night? See here, 1. Christ's foresight of his sufferings; he knew all those things that should come upon him; for he had obliged himself to suffer them; unless we had strength, as Christ had, to bear the discovery, he should not covet to know what shall come upon us; it would but anticipate our pain; sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof: Yet it will do us good to expect sufferings in general, so as that when they come we may say, it is but what we looked for, the cost we sat down and counted upon. 2. Christ's forwardness to his sufferings, he did not out-run them, but went out to meet

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them, and reached forth his hand to take the bitter cup. When the people would have forced him to a crown, and offered to make him a king in Galilee, he withdrew and hid himself, John vi. 15. but when they came to force him to a cross, he offered himself; for he came to this world to suffer, and went to the other world to reign. This will not warrant us needlessly to expose ourselves to troubles, for we know not when our hour is come; but then we are called to suffering; when we have no way to avoid it but by sin; and when it comes to that, let none of these things move us, for they cannot hurt us.

(2.) He met them with a very calm and mild answer, when they told him whom they were in quest of, ver. 5. They said, *Jesus of Nazareth*, and he said, *I am he*.

1. It should seem, their eyes were held that they could not know him. It is highly probable, that many of the Roman band, however the officers of the temple, had often seen him, at least to satisfy their curiosity; however, Judas to be sure knew him well enough, and yet none of them could pretend to say, *Thou art the man we seek*. Thus he shewed them the folly of bringing lights to see for him, for he could make them not to know him, when they saw him; and hath shewed us how easily he can insinuate the counsels of his enemies, and make them lose themselves when they are seeking mischief.

2. In their enquiries for him they called him *Jesus of Nazareth*, which was the only title they knew him by, and probably he was so called in their warrant: It was a name of reproach given him to darken the evidence of his being the Messiah: By this it appears they knew him not, whence he was; for if they had known, surely they would not have persecuted him.

3. He fairly answers them, *I am he*. He did not improve the advantage he had against them by their blindness, as Elisha did against the Syrians, telling them, *This is not the way, neither is this the city*; but improves it as an opportunity of shewing his willingness to suffer. Though they called him *Jesus of Nazareth*, he answered to the name, for he despised the reproach: he might have said, *I am not he*, for he was *Jesus of Bethlehem*; but he would by no means allow equivocations: He has hereby taught us to own him, whatever it cost us; not to be ashamed of him or his world; but even in difficult times, to confess Christ crucified, and manfully fight under his banner. *I am he*, *Εγώ εἰμι*, *I am he*, is the glorious name of the blessed God, Exod. iii. 14. and the honour of that name is justly challenged by the blessed Jesus.

4. Particular notice is taken in a parenthesis that *Judas stood with them*; He that used to stand with them that followed Christ, now stood with those that fought against him. This describes an apostate; he is one that changes side, he herds himself with those with whom his heart always was, and with whom he shall have his lot in the judgment day. This is mentioned, 1. To shew the impudence of Judas. One would wonder where he got the confidence with which he now faced his Master, and was not ashamed, neither could he blush; Satan in his heart gave him a whore's forehead. 2. To shew that Judas was particularly aimed at in the power which went along with that word, *I am he*, to foil the aggressors; was an arrow levelled at the traitor's conscience, and pierced him to the quick; for Christ's coming and his voice will be, of all sinners, most terrible to apostates and betrayers of him.

2. See how he terrified and obliged them to retire, ver. 6. *They went backward, and, like men thunderstruck, fell to the ground*. It should seem, they did not fall forwards, as humbling themselves before him and yielding to him, but backward, as standing it out to the utmost: Thus Christ was declared to be more than a man; even then when he was trampled upon as a worm, and no man. This word, *I am he*, had revived his disciples, and raised them up, Matt. xiv. 27. but the same word strikes his enemies down. Hereby he shewed plainly,

(1.) What he could have done with them; when he struck them down, he could have struck them dead; when he spoke them to the ground, he could have spoke them to hell, and have sent them, like Korah's company, the next way thither; but he would not do so, 1. Because the hour of his suffering was come, and he would not put it by; only shew that this life was not forced from him, but he laid it down of himself, as he had said. 2. Because he would give an instance of his patience and forbearance with the world of men, and his compassionate love to his very enemies: In striking them down and no more, he gave them both a call to repent, and space to repent; but their hearts were hardened, and all was in vain.

(2.) What he will do at last with all his implacable enemies, that will not repent to give him glory; they shall flee, they shall fall before him. Now the scripture was accomplished, Psalm xxi. 12. *Thou shalt make them turn their back*, and Psalm xx. 8. and it will be accomplished more and more; with the breath of his mouth he will slay the wicked, 2 Thess. ii. 8. Rev. xix. 21. *Quid judicaturus faciet, qui judicandus hec facit?* Augustin.

Fourthly, Having given his enemies a repulse, he gives his friends a protection, and that by his word too, ver. 7, 8, 9. where we may observe,

1. How he continued to expose himself to their rage, ver. 7. They did not lie long where they fell, but, by divine permission, got up again; it is only in the other world that God's judgments are everlasting. When they were down one would have thought Christ should have made his escape; when they were up again, one would have thought they should have let fall their pursuit; but we still find, 1. They are as eager as ever to seize him. It is in some confusion and disorder that they recover themselves, cannot imagine what ailed them that they could not keep their ground, but will impute it to any thing rather than Christ's power. Note, There are hearts so very hard in sin, that nothing will work upon them to reduce and reclaim them. 2. He is as willing as ever to be seized. When they were fallen before him, he did not insult over them, but, seeing them at a loss asked them the same question, *Whom seek ye?* And they gave him the same answer, *Jesus of Nazareth*. In his repeating the question, he seems to come yet closer to their consciences; Do ye not know whom ye seek? Are you not aware that you are in an error, and do not meddle with your match? Have you not had enough of it, but will you try the other struggle? Did ever any harden his heart against God and prosper? In their repeating the same answer they shewed an obstinacy in their wicked way; they still call him *Jesus of Nazareth* with as much disdain as ever, and Judas as unrelenting as any of them. *Let us therefore fear, lest*, by a few bold steps at first in a sinful way, *our hearts be hardened*.

2. How he contrived to secure his disciples from their rage: He improved this advantage against them for the protection of his followers; when he shews his courage with reference to himself, *I have told you that I am he*; he shews his care for his disciples, *Let these go their way*: He speaks this as a command to them, rather than a contract with them; for they lay at his mercy, not he at theirs: He chargeth them therefore as *one having authority*; *Let these go their way*; it is at your peril if you meddle with them. This aggravated the sin of the disciples in forsaking him, and particularly Peter's in denying him, that Christ had given them this pass or warrant for protection, and yet they had not faith and courage enough to rely upon that, but betook themselves to such base and sorry shifts for their security. When Christ said, *Let these go their way*, he intended,

(1.) To manifest his affectionate concern for his disciples; when he exposed

posed himself he excused them, because they were not as yet fit to suffer; their faith was weak and their spirits low, and it would have been as much as their souls, and the lives of their souls were worth, to bring them into sufferings now; *New wine must not be put into old bottles.* And besides they had other work to do; they must go their way, for they are to go into all the world to preach the gospel: *Destroy them not, for a blessing is in them.* Now herein, 1. Christ gives us great encouragement to follow him; for though he has allotted us sufferings, yet he considers our frame, will wisely time the cross, and proportion it to our strength, and will deliver the godly out of temptation, either from it or through it. 2. He gives us a good example of love for our brethren and concern for their welfare: We must not consult our own ease and safety only, but others as well as our own, and in some cases more than our own: There is a generous and heroic love, which will enable us to lay down our lives for our brethren, 1 John iii. 16.

(2.) He intended to give a specimen of his undertaking as mediator: When he offered himself to suffer and die, it was that we might escape: He was our *antiphoxer*, a sufferer in our stead; when he said, *Lo, I come*, he said also, *Let these go their way*; like the ram offered instead of Isaac.

3. Now herein he confirmed the word which he had spoken a little before, chap. xvii. 12. *Of them which thou gavest me, I have lost none.* Christ, by fulfilling that word in this particular, gave an assurance that it should be accomplished in the full extent of it, not only for them that were now with him, but for all that should believe on him through their word. Though Christ's keeping of them was meant especially of the preservation of their souls from sin and apostasy, yet it is here applied to the preservation of their natural lives, and very fitly, for even the body was a part of Christ's charge and care; he is to raise it up at the last day, and therefore to preserve that as well as the spirit and soul, 1 Thess. v. 23. 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18. Christ will preserve the natural life for the service to which it is designed; it is given him to be used for him, and he will not lose the service of it, but will be magnified in it, whether by life or death; it shall be held in life as long as any use is to be made of it; Christ's witnesses shall not die, till they have given in their evidence: But this is not all, this preservation of the disciples was, in the tendency of it, a spiritual preservation; they were now so weak in faith and resolution, that in all probability, if they had been called out to suffer at this time they would have shamed themselves and their master, and some of them, at least the weaker of them, would have been lost; and therefore that he might lose none, he would not expose them. The safety and preservation of the saints, is owing not only to the divine grace in proportioning the strength to the trial, but to the divine providence in proportioning the trial to the strength.

Fifthly, Having provided for the safety of his disciples, he rebukes the rashness of one of them, and represseth the violence of his followers, as he had repulsed the violence of his persecutors, ver. 10, 11. where we have,

1. Peter's rashness: He had a sword, it is not likely he wore one constantly as a gentleman, but they had two swords among them all, Luke xxii. 38. and Peter was trusted with one, and he drew it, for now, if ever, he thought it was time to use it, and he smote one of the high priest's servants, who it is likely was one of the forwardest, and aiming, it is likely, to cleave him down the head, missed his blow, and only cut off his right ear: *The servant's name*, for the greater certainty of the narrative is recorded; it was *Malchus*, or *Malluch*, Neh. x. 4.

(1.) We must here acknowledge Peter's good will; he had an honest zeal for his Master, though now misguided; he had lately promised to venture his life for him, and would now make his words good: Probably it exasperated Peter to see Judas at the head of this gang; his baseness excited Peter's boldness, and I wonder when he did draw his sword, he did not aim at his head.

(2.) Yet we must acknowledge Peter's ill conduct; and though his good intention did excuse, yet it would not justify him. 1. He had no warrant from his Master for what he did, Christ's soldiers must wait the word of command, and not out-run it, and be ore they expose themselves to sufferings, must see to it, not only that their cause be good, but their call clear. 2. He transgressed the duty of his place, and resisted the powers that were, which Christ had never countenanced, but forbidden. Matt. v. 39. *that ye resist not evil.* 3. He opposed his Master's suffering, and notwithstanding the rebuke he had for it once, is ready to repeat, *Master, spare thyself*; suffering be far from thee; though Christ had told him he must and would suffer, and that his hour was now come; thus while he seemed to fight for Christ, he fought against him. 4. He broke the capitulation his Master had lately made with the enemy; when he said, *let these go their way*: He not only intended for their safety, but in effect pushed his word for their good behaviour, that they should go away peaceably; this Peter heard, and yet would not be bound by. As we may be guilty of a sinful cowardice when we are called to appear, so we may be of a sinful forwardness, when we are called to retire. 5. He foolishly exposed himself and his fellow disciples to the fury of this enraged multitude: if he had cut off Malchus's head when he cut off his ear, we may suppose the soldiers would have fallen upon all the disciples and have hewed them to pieces, and would have represented Christ as no better than Barabbas. Thus many have been guilty of self-destruction in their zeal for self-preservation. 6. Peter played the coward so soon after this, denying his Master, that we have reason to think he would not have done this, but that he saw his Master beat them down to the ground, and then he could deal with them, but when he saw him surrender himself notwithstanding, his courage failed him then: whereas the true Christian hero will appear in the cause of Christ, not only when it is prevailing, but when it seems to be declining; will be on the right side, though it be not the rising side.

3. We must acknowledge God's over-ruling providence in directing the stroke, so that it should do no more execution, but only cut off his ear, which was rather marking him than maiming him. Asail, in giving Christ an opportunity to manifest his power and goodness in healing the hurt, Luke xxii. 51. Thus what was in danger of turning to Christ's reproach, proved an occasion of that which redounded much to his honour, even among his adversaries.

2. The rebuke his Master gave him, ver. 11. *Put up thy sword into the sheath*, or scabbard; it is a gentle reproof, because it was his zeal that carried him beyond the bounds of discretion: he did not aggravate the matter, only bid him do so no more. Many think when they are in grief and distress it will excuse them if they be hot and hasty with those about them: but Christ has here set us an example of meekness in sufferings. Peter must put up his sword, for it was the sword of the Spirit that was to be committed to him; weapons of warfare not carnal, yet mighty. When Christ with a sword felled the aggressors, he showed Peter how he should be armed with a word, quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and with that, not long after this; he laid Ananias and Sapphira dead at his feet.

3. The reason for this rebuke. *The up which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?* Matthew relates another reason Christ gave for this rebuke, but John preserves this which he has omitted, in which Christ gives us,

1. A full proof of his own submission to his Father's will; of all that was amiss in what Peter did, he seems to resent nothing so much as that he would have hindered his sufferings now his hour was come; what, Peter, wilt thou step in between the cup and the lip? *Get thee hence, Satan.* If Christ be determined to suffer and die, it is presumption for Peter in word or deed to oppose it. *Shall I not drink it?* The manner of expression speaks a settled resolution, and that he would not entertain a thought to the contrary. He was willing to drink of this cup, though it was a bitter cup, the infusion of the wormwood and the gall; the cup of trembling, a bloody cup, the dregs of the cup of the Lord's wrath, Isa. li. 22. yet he drank it, that he might put into our hands the cup of salvation, the cup of consolation, the cup of blessing; and therefore he is willing to drink it, because his Father put it into his hand. If his Father will have it so, it is for the best, and he it so.

2. A fair pattern to us of submission to God's will in every thing that concerns us. We must pledge Christ in the cup that he drank of, Matt. xx. 23. and must argue ourselves into a compliance. 1. It is but a cup; a small matter comparatively, be it what it will. It is not a sea, a red sea, a dead sea, for it is not hell; it is light, and but for a moment. 2. It is a cup that is given us; sufferings are gifts. 3. It is given us by a Father, who has a Father's authority, and doth us no wrong; a Father's affection, and means us no hurt.

Sixthly, Having entirely reconciled himself to the dispensation, he calmly surrendered, and yielded himself a prisoner, not because he could not have made his escape, but because he would not. One would have thought the cure of Malchus's ear should have made them relent, but nothing would win upon them. *Malidictus furor, quem nec majestas miracula, nec pietas beneficii constringere potuit.* Anselm. Observe here,

1. How they seized him. They took Jesus. Only some few of them could lay hands on him, but it is charged upon them all, for they were all aiding and abetting; in treason there are no necessities; all are principals. Now the scripture was fulfilled, bulls have compassed me, Psal. xxii. 12. compassed me like bees, Psal. cxviii. 12. The breath of our nostrils is taken in their pit, Lam. iv. 20. They had so often been frustrated in their attempts to seize him, that now they had got him into their hands, we may suppose, they flew upon him with so much the more violence.

2. How they secured him; they bound him. This particular of his sufferings is taken notice of only by this evangelist, that as soon as ever he was taken, he was bound, pinioned, handcuffed; tradition saith, they bound him with such cruelty, that the blood started out at his fingers ends. And that having bound his hands behind him, they clapped an iron chain about his neck, and with that dragged him. See Gerhard. Harm. cap. v.

1. This speaks the spite of his persecutor. They bound him, 1. That they might torment him and put him to pain, as they bound Samson to afflict him. 2. That they might disgrace him, and put him to shame: slaves were bound, so was Christ, though free-born. 3. That they might prevent his escape, Judas having bidden them hold him fast. See their folly! that they should think to fetter that power which had but just now proved itself omnipotent! 4. They bound him as one already condemned, for they were resolved to prosecute him to the death, and that he should die as a fool dieth, i. e. as a malefactor, with his hands bound, 2 Sam. iii. 33, 34. Christ had bound the consciences of his persecutors with the power of his word, which galled them; and to be revenged on him, they laid these bonds on him.

2. Christ's being bound was very significant; in this as in other things there was a mystery. 1. Before they bound him, he had bound himself by his own undertaking to the work and office of a mediator; he was already bound to the horns of the altar with the cords of his own love to man, and duty to his Father, else their cords would not have held him. 2. We were bound with the cords of our iniquity, Prov. v. 22. with the yoke of our transgressions, Lam. i. 14. Guilt is a bond on the soul, by which we are bound over to the judgment of God; corruption is a bond on the soul, by which we are bound under the power of Satan. Christ being made sin for us to free us from those bonds, himself submitted to be bound for us, else we had been bound hand and foot, and reserved in chains of darkness. To his bonds we owe our liberty, his confinement was our enlargement; thus the Son maketh us free. 3. The types and prophecies of the Old Testament were herein accomplished; Isaac was bound that he might be sacrificed; Joseph was bound, and the irons entered into his soul, in order to his being brought from prison to reign, Psal. cv. 18. Samson was bound in order to his slaying more of the Philistines at his death than he had done in his life. And the Messiah was prophesied of as a prisoner, Isa. liii. 8. 4. Christ was bound that he might bind us to duty and obedience. His bonds for us are bonds upon us, by which we are for ever obliged to love him, and serve him. Paul's salutation to his friends, is Christ's to us all, remember my bonds. (Col. iv. 18.) remember them as bound with him from all sin and to all duty. 5. Christ's bonds for us were designed to make our bonds for him easy to us, if at any time we be so called out to suffer for him, to sanctify and sweeten them, and put honour upon them; thus enabled Paul and Silas to sing in the stocks, and Ignatius to call his bonds for Christ spiritual pearls. Epist. ad Ephes.

13. And led him away to Annas first (for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas which was the high priest that same year.) 14. Now Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. 15. ¶ And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. That disciple was known unto the high priest: and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. 16. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. 17. Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. 18. And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals, (for it was cold; and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself. 19. ¶ The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. 20. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing. 21. Why asketh thou me? ask them, which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said. 22. And when he had thus

thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high-priest so? 23. Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why finitest thou me? 24. (Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high-priest.) 25. And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not. 26. One of the servants of the high-priest, being his kinsman, whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? 27. Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.

We have here an account of Christ's arraignment before the high-priest, and some passages that occurred therein, which were omitted by the other evangelists; and Peter's denying of him, which the other evangelists had given the story of entire by itself, is interwoven with the other passages. The crime laid to his charge, having relation to religion, the judges of the spiritual court took it to fall directly under their cognisance: both Jews and Gentiles seized him, and so both Jews and Gentiles tried and condemned him, for he died for the sins of both. Let us go over the story in order.

First, Having seized him they led him away to Annas first, before they brought him to the court, that was set expecting him in the house of Caiaphas, *ver. 1.*

1. They led him away, led him in triumph, as a trophy of their victory; led him as a lamb to the slaughter, and they led him through the sheep-gate spoken of, *Neh. iii. 1.* for through that they went from the mount of Olives into Jerusalem. They hurried him away with violence, as if he had been the worst and vilest of malefactors. We had been led away of our own impetuous lusts, led captive by Satan at his will, and that we might be rescued, Christ was led away, led captive by Satan's agents and instruments.

2. They led him away to their Masters that sent them; it was now about midnight, and one would think they should have put him in a ward, *Lev. xxiv. 12.* should have led him to some prison, till it was a proper time to call a court; but he is hurried away immediately, not to the justice of peace to be committed, but to the judges to be condemned; so extremely violent was the prosecution, partly because they feared a rescue, which they would thus not only leave no time for, but give a terror to: partly because they greedily thirsted after Christ's blood, as the eagle that hasteth to the prey.

3. They led him to Annas first; probably his house lay in the way, and was convenient for them to call at to refresh themselves, and, as some think, to be paid for their service. I suppose Annas was old and infirm, and could not be present in council with the rest at that time of night, and yet earnestly desired to see the prey: To gratify him therefore with the assurance of their success, that the old man might sleep the better, and to receive his blessing for it, they produce their prisoner before him. It is sad to see them that are old and sickly, when they cannot commit sin as formerly, taking pleasure in them that do. Dr. Lightfoot thinks Annas was not present, because he was to attend early that morning in the temple, to examine the sacrifices which were that day to be offered, whether they were without blemish; if so, there was a significance in it, that Christ the great sacrifice was present to him, and sent away bound, as approved and ready for the altar.

4. This Annas was father-in-law to Caiaphas the high-priest; this kindred by marriage between them, come in as a reason either why Caiaphas ordered that this piece of respect should be done to Annas, to favour him with the first sight of the prisoner; or why Annas was willing to countenance Caiaphas in a matter his heart was so much upon. Note, Acquaintance and alliance with wicked people is a great confirmation to many in their wicked ways.

Secondly, Annas did not long detain them, being as willing as any of them to have the prosecution pushed on, and therefore sent him bound to Caiaphas to his house, which was appointed for the rendezvous of the Sanhedrin upon this occasion: or to the usual place in the temple, where the high-priest kept his court; this is mentioned, *ver. 24.* but our translators intimate in the margin, that it should come in here, and accordingly read it there, *Annas had sent him.* Observe here,

1. The power of Caiaphas intimated, *ver. 13.* He was high-priest that same year. The high-priest's commission was during life; but there were now such frequent changes by the Simoniacal artifices of aspiring men with the government, that it was become almost an annual office, a presage of its final period approaching; while they were undermining one another, God was overturning them all, that he might come whose right it was. Caiaphas was high-priest the same year when Messiah was to be cut off; which intimates, 1. That when an ill thing was to be done by a high-priest, according to the fore-knowledge of God, providence so ordered it, that an ill man should be in the chair to do it. 2. That when God would make it to appear what corruption there was in the heart of a bad man, he put him into a place of power, where he had temptation and opportunity to exert it. It was the ruin of Caiaphas that he was high-priest that year, and so became a ringleader in the putting of Christ to death. Many a man's advancement has lost him his reputation, and he had not been dishonoured if he had not been preferred.

2. The malice of Caiaphas, which is intimated, *ver. 14.* by the repeating of what he had said some time before, that right or wrong, guilty or innocent, it was expedient that one man should die for the people; which refers to the story, *John xi. 50.* This comes in here, to shew, 1. What an ill man he was; this was that Caiaphas that governed himself and the church by rules of policy, in defiance of the rules of equity. 2. What ill usage Christ was likely to meet with in his court, when his case was judged before it was heard, and they were already resolved what to do with him; he must die; so that this trial was a jest. Thus the enemies of Christ's gospel are resolved, true or false to run it down. 3. It is a testimony to the innocent of our Lord Jesus, from the mouth of one of his worst enemies, who owned that he fell a sacrifice to the public good, and that it was not just he should die, but expedient only.

3. The concurrence of Annas in the prosecution of Christ. He made himself a partaker in guilt, 1. With the captain and officers that without law or mercy had bound him, for he approved it by continuing him bound, when he should have loosed him, he not being convicted of any crime, nor having attempted an escape. If we do not what we can to undo what others have ill done, we are accessaries *ex post facto.* It was more excusable in the rude soldiers to bind him, than in Annas, who should know better things to continue him bound. 2. With the chief priest and council that con-

demned him, and prosecute him to death. This Annas was not present with them, yet thus he wished them good speed, and became a partaker of their evil deeds.

Thirdly, In the house of Caiaphas, Simon Peter began to deny his master, *ver. 15—18.*

1. It was with much ado that Peter got into the hall where the court was set, an account of which we have, *ver. 15. 16.* Where we may observe,

1. Peter's kindness to Christ, which (though it proved no kindness) appeared in two things. 1. That he followed Jesus when he was led away; though at first he fled with the rest, yet afterwards he took heart a little, and followed at some distance; calling to mind the promises he had made to adhere to him, whatever it cost him. They that had followed Christ in the midst of his honours, and shared with him in those honours, when the people cried Hosanna to him, ought to have followed him now in the midst of his reproaches, and to have shared with him in those. They that truly love and value Christ, will follow him all weathers and all ways. 2. When he could not get in where Jesus was in the midst of his enemies, he stood at the door without, willing to be as near him as he could, and waiting for an opportunity to get nearer. Thus when we meet with opposition in following Christ, we must shew our good will. But yet this kindness of Peter's was no kindness, because he had not strength and courage enough to persevere in it, and so, as it proved, he did but run himself into a snare: and even his following Christ, considering all things, was to be blamed; because Christ, who knew him better than he knew himself, had expressly told him, *chap. xiii. 36. Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now;* and had told him again and again he would deny him; and he had lately had experience of his own weakness in forsaking him. Note, We must take heed of tempting God by running upon difficulties beyond our strength, and venturing too far in a way of suffering. If our call be clear to expose ourselves, we may hope that God will enable us to honour him; but if it be not, we may fear that God will leave us to shame ourselves.

2. The other disciple's kindness to Peter, which yet, as it proved, was no kindness neither. St. John several times in this gospel speaking of himself as another disciple, many interpreters have been led by that to fancy that this other disciple here was John; and many conjectures they have how he should come to be known to the high priest; *propter generis nobilitatem*, saith Jerome, *Epitaph. Marcel.* as if he were a better gentleman born than his brother James, when they were both the sons of Zebedee the fisherman; some will tell you he had sold his estate to the high priest; others that he supplied his family with fish, which was very improbable. But I see no reason to think that this other disciple was John, or one of the twelve; other sheep Christ had which were not of the fold; and this might be, as the Syriac reads it, *unus ex discipulis aliis*, one of those other disciples that believed in Christ, but resided at Jerusalem, and kept their places there; perhaps Joseph of Arimathea, or Nicodemus, known to the high priest, but not known to him to be disciples of Christ. Note, As there are many who seem disciples and are not so; so there are many that are disciples and seem not so. There are good people hid in courts, even Nero's, as well as hid in crowds. We must not conclude a man to be no friend to Christ, merely because he has acquaintance and conversation with those that were his known enemies.

Now, 1. This other disciple, whoever he was, shewed a respect to Peter in introducing him, not only to gratify his curiosity and affection, but to give him an opportunity of being serviceable to his master upon his trial, if there were occasion. Those that have a real kindness for Christ and his ways, though their temper may be reserved, and their circumstances lead them to be cautious and retired; yet if their faith be sincere when they are called to it, they will discover which way their inclination lies, by being ready to do a professed disciple a good turn. Peter perhaps had formerly introduced this disciple into conversation with Christ, and now he requires his kindness, and is not ashamed to own him, though it should seem he looked but sneakingly.

2. But this kindness proved no kindness, nay a great diskindness; by letting him into the high priest's hall, he let him into temptation, and the consequence was ill. Note, The courtesies of our friends often prove a snare to us through a misguided affection.

2. Peter being got in, was immediately assaulted with the temptation, and foiled by it, *ver. 17.* Observe here, 1. How slight the attack was, It was a silly maid, of so small account that she was only set to keep the door, that challenged him, and she only asked him carelessly, *Art not thou one of this man's disciples?* probably suspecting it by his sheepish look, and coming in timorously. We should many a time better maintain a good cause, if we had a good heart on it, and could put a good face on it. Peter had had some reason to take the alarm, if Malchus had set upon him, and had said, this is he that cut off my ear, and I will have his head for it; but when a maid only asked him, *Art not thou one of them?* he might without danger have answered, *And what if I am?* Suppose the servants had ridiculed him, and insulted over him upon it, those bear but little for Christ that cannot bear that; that is but running with the footmen.

2. How speedy the surrender was; without taking time to recollect himself, he suddenly answered, *I am not.* If he had had the boldness of the lion, he would have said, it is my honour that I am so; or if he had had the wisdom of the serpent, he would have kept silence at this time, so it was an evil time. But all his care being for his own safety, he thought he could not secure that but by a peremptory denial; *I am not;* he not only denies it, but even disclaims it, and scorns her words.

3. Yet he goes further into the temptation, *ver. 18.* And the servants and officer stood there, and Peter with them.

1. See how the servants made much of themselves; the night being cold, they made a fire in the hall, not for their masters, they were so eager in prosecuting Christ, that they forgot cold; but for themselves, to refresh themselves. They cared not what become of Christ, all their care was to sit and warm themselves, *Amos vi. 6.*

2. See how Peter herded himself with them, and made one among them, *He sat and warmed himself.*

1. It was a fault bad enough that he did not attend his Master, and appear for him at the upper end of the hall, where he was now under examination. He might have been a witness for him, and have confronted the false witnesses that swore against him, if his Master had called him; however, he might have been a witness to him, might have taken exact notice of what passed, that he might relate it to the other disciples, who could none of them get in to hear the trial; he might have learned by his Master's example how to carry himself when it should come to his turn to suffer thus; yet neither his conscience nor his curiosity could bring him into the court, but he sits by, as if, like Gallio, he cared for none of these things. And yet at the same time we have reason to think his heart was as full of grief and concern as it could hold, but he had not the courage to own it. Lord, lead us not into temptation.

2. It was much worse that he joined himself with those that were his Master's enemies; he stood with them and warmed himself; that was a poor excuse

excuse for joining with them. A little thing will draw those into bad company, that will be drawn to it by the love of a good friend. If Peter's zeal for his Master had not failed, but had continued in the heat it seemed to be of but a few hours before, he had not had occasion to warm himself now. Peter was much to be blamed.

1. Because he associated himself with these wicked men, and kept company with them. Doubtless they were diverting themselves with this night's expedition, scoffing at Christ, at what he had said, at what he had done; and triumphing in their victory over him; and what sort of entertainment would this give to Peter? If he said as they said, or by silence gave consent, he involved himself in sin: if not he exposed himself to danger. If Peter had not so much courage as to appear publicly for his Master, yet he might have had so much devotion as to retire into a corner, and weep in secret for his Master's sufferings and his own sin in forsaking him; if he could not have done good, he might have kept out of the way of doing hurt. It is better to abound than appear to no purpose, or ill purpose.

2. Because he desired to be thought one of them, that he might not be suspected to be a disciple of Christ. Is this Peter? What a contradiction is this to the prayer of every good man, *gather not my soul among sinners. Saul among the prophets* is not so absurd as David among the Philistines. They that despise the lot of the scornful hereafter, should dread the seat of the scornful now. It is ill warning ourselves with those with whom we are in danger of burning ourselves. *Psal. cxli. 4.*

Fourthly, Peter, Christ's friend, having begun to deny him, the high-priest, his enemy, begins to accuse him, or rather urges him to accuse himself, *ver. 19, 20, 21.* It should seem the first attempt was to prove him a seducer and a teacher of false doctrine, which this evangelist relates; and when they failed in the proof of that, then they charged him with blasphemy, which is related by the other evangelists, and therefore omitted here. Observe,

1. The articles or heads upon which Christ was examined, *ver. 19.* concerning his disciples and his doctrine. Observe,

1. The irregularity of the process; it was against all law and equity; they seize him as a criminal, and now he is their prisoner, they have nothing to lay to his charge; no libel, no prosecutor; but the judge himself must be the prosecutor, and the prisoner himself the witness, and against all reason and justice is put on to be his own accuser.

2. The intention. The high-priest then, or, therefore, which seems to refer to *ver. 14.* because he had resolved that Christ must be sacrificed to their private malice under colour of the public good, therefore he examined him upon those interrogatories which would touch his life. He examined him,

1. Concerning his disciples, that he might charge him with sedition, and represent him as dangerous to the Roman government, as well as to the Jewish church. He asked him who were his disciples? What number they were? Of what country? What were their names and characters? Insinuating that his scholars were designed for soldiers, and would in time become a formidable body. Some think his question concerning his disciples was, what was now become of them all, where were they? And why did they not appear? upbraiding him with their cowardice in deserting him; thus adding to the affliction of it. There was something significant in this, that Christ's calling and owning his disciples was the first thing laid to his charge, but it was for their sakes that he sanctified himself and suffered.

2. Concerning his doctrine, that they might charge him with heresy, and bring him under the penalty of the law against false prophets. *Deut. xiii. 9, 10.* This was a matter properly cognizable in that court, *Deut. xvii. 12.* therefore a prophet could not perish but at Jerusalem, where that court sat. They could not prove any false doctrine upon him; but they hoped to extort something from him, which they might ascribe to his prejudice, and to make him an offender for some word or other. *Isa. xxix. 21.* They said nothing to him concerning his miracles, by which he had done so much good, and proved his doctrine beyond contradiction, because of these they were sure they could take no hold. Thus the adversaries of Christ, while they are industriously quarrelling with his truth, willfully shut their eyes against the evidences of it, and take no notice of them.

3. The appeal Christ made in answer to these interrogatories. 1. As to his disciples he said nothing; because it was an impertinent question; if this doctrine was found and good, his having disciples to communicate it, was no more than what was practised and allowed by their own doctors. If Galathas in asking him concerning his disciples, designed to ensnare them, and bring them into trouble, it was in kindness to them that he said nothing of them, for he had said, *Let these go their way.* If he meant to upbraid him with their cowardice, no wonder he said nothing, for *pudefat hoc opprobria nobis, & dei potuisse & non potuisse refelli;* he would say nothing to condemn them, and could say nothing to justify them.

2. As to his doctrine he said nothing in particular, but in general referred himself to those that heard him, being not only made manifest to God, but made manifest also in their consciences, *ver. 20, 21.*

3. He tacitly charges his judges with illegal proceedings; he doth not indeed speak evil of the rulers of the people, nor say now to these princes, ye are wicked; but he appeals to the settled rules of their own court, whether they dealt fairly by him? *Do ye indeed judge righteously?* *Psal. lxxviii. 1.* So here, *Why ask ye me?* Which implies two absurdities in judgment: 1. *Why ask ye me now concerning my doctrine, when you have already condemned it?* They had made an order of court for the excommunicating of all that owned him, *chap. ix. 22.* had issued out a proclamation for the apprehending of him, and now they come to ask what his doctrine is? Thus was he condemned, as his doctrine and cause commonly are, unheard. 2. *Why ask ye me?* Must I accuse myself, when you have no evidence against me?

4. He insists upon his fair and open dealing with them in the publication of his doctrine, and justifies himself in that. The crime which the Sanhedrin by the law was to enquire after, was the clandestine spreading of dangerous doctrines, insinuating secretly, *Deut. xiii. 6.* As to this therefore Christ clears himself very fully.

1. As to the manner of his preaching, he spake openly, *παρρησια,* with freedom and plainness of speech; he did not deliver things ambiguously, as Apollo did his oracles; those that would understand the truth and spread corrupt notions, do it by fly insinuations, putting queries, starting difficulties, and asserting nothing; but Christ explained himself fully with, *Verily, verily, I say unto you;* his reproofs were free and bold, and his testimonies express against the corruptions of the age.

2. As to the persons he preached to; he spake to the world, i. e. to all that had ears to hear, and were willing to hear him, high or low, learned or unlearned, Jew or Gentile, friend or foe; his doctrine spread not the censures of a mixed multitude; nor did he grudge the knowledge of it to any, as the masters of some rare invention commonly do, but freely communicated it, as the sun doth his beams.

3. As to the places he preached in; when he was in the country, he preached ordinarily in the synagogues, the places of meeting for worship, and on the sabbath-day, the time of meeting; when he came up to Jerusalem, he preached the same doctrine in the temple at the time of the solemn feasts, when the Jews from all parts assembled there; though he often

preached in private houses, and on mountains, and by the sea-side, to shew that his words and worship were not to be confined to temples and synagogues; yet what he preached in private, was the very same with what he delivered publicly. Note, The doctrine of Christ purely and plainly preached, need not be ashamed to appear to the most numerous assembly, for it carries its own strength and beauty along with it: What Christ's faithful ministers say, they would be willing all the world should hear; without cries in the places of concourse, *Prov. i. 21. — viii. 3. 13. 3.*

4. As to the doctrine itself, he said nothing in secret contrary to what he said in public; but only by way of repetition and explication. *In secret have I said nothing;* as if he had been either suspicious of the truth of it, or conscious of any ill design in it. He sought no corners, for he feared no colours, nor said any thing that he need be ashamed of; what he did speak in private to his disciples, he ordered them to proclaim on the house-tops. *Mat. x. 27.* God faith of himself, *Isa. xiv. 19. I have not spoken in secret;* his commandment is not hidden, *Deut. xxx. 11.* And the righteousness of faith speaks in like manner, *Rom. x. 5. Veritas nihil metuit nisi abscondi.* Tertullian.

5. He appeals to those that had heard him, and desires they might be examined what doctrine he had preached, and whether it had that dangerous tendency that was suspected. *Ask them that heard me, what I said unto them;* some of them may be in court, or may be sent for out of their beds; he means not his friends and followers, who might be presumed to speak in his favour, but all any impartial hearer; ask your own officers; some think he pointed to them, when he said, *behind,* they know what I said, referring to the report which they had made of his preaching, *chap. vii. 46. Never man spake like this man.* Nay, you may ask some upon the bench, for it is probable some of them had heard him, and been put to silence by them. Note, That the doctrine of Christ may safely appeal to all that know it, and has so much right reason on its side, that they who will judge impartially cannot but witness to it.

Sixthly, While the judges were examining him, the servants that stood by were abusing him, *ver. 22, 23.*

1. It was a base affront which one of the officers gave him; though he spoke with so much calmness and convincing evidence, this insolent fellow struck him with the palm of his hand, probably on the side of his head or face, saying, *Answerest thou the high-priest so?* As if he had behaved himself rudely to the court.

2. He struck him, *Idem est percussio, he gave him a blow.* Some think it signifies a blow with a rod or wand, from *gaddo,* or with the staff, which was the badge of his office. Now the scripture was fulfilled, *Isa. l. 6. I gave my cheeks, ut percussio;* in the Seventy, the word here used. And *Mic. v. 1. Thy shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek;* and the type answered, *Job xvi. 10. They have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully.* It was unjust to strike one that neither said nor did amiss; it was insolent for a menial servant to strike one that was confessedly a person of account; it was cowardly to strike one that had his hands tied, and barbarous to strike a prisoner at the bar. Here was a breach of the peace in the face of the court, and yet the judges countenanced it. Confusion of face was our due; but Christ here took it to himself; upon me be the curse, the shame.

3. He checked him in a haughty imperious manner, *answerest thou the high-priest so?* As if the blessed Jesus were not good enough to speak to, his master, or not wise enough to know how to speak to him, but like a rude and ignorant prisoner, must be controlled by the jailer, and taught how to behave himself.

Some of the ancients suggests that this officer was Malchus, who owed to Christ the healing of his ear, and the saving of his head, and yet made him this ill return. But whoever it was, it was done to please the high-priest, and to curry favour with him; for what he said, speaks a jealousy for the dignity of the high-priest. Wicked rulers will not want wicked servants, who will help forward the affliction of those whom their masters persecute. There was a successor of this high-priest that commanded the by-standers to smite Paul thus on the mouth, *Acts xxiii. 2.* Some think this officer took himself to be affronted by Christ's appeal to those about him concerning his doctrine, as if he would have vouched him to be a witness, and perhaps he was one of those officers that had spoken honourably of him, *John vii. 47.* and lest he should now be thought a secret friend to him, he thus appears a bitter enemy.

4. Christ bore this affront with wonderful meekness and patience, *ver. 23. If I have spoken evil, in what I have now said, bear witness of the evil.* Observe it to the court, and let them judge of it, who are the proper judges; but if well, and as it did become me, why smitest thou me? Christ could have answered him with a miracle of wrath, could have struck him dumb or dead, or have withered his hand that was lifted up against him. But this was the day of his patience and suffering, and he answered him with the meekness of wisdom, to teach us not to avenge ourselves; not to render railing for railing, but with the innocency of the dove, to bear injuries, even then when with the wisdom of the serpent, as our Saviour, we shew the injustice of them, and appeal to the magistrate concerning them. Christ did not here turn the other cheek, by which it appears that that rule, *Mat. v. 39.* is not to be understood literally; a man may possibly turn the other cheek, and yet have his heart full of malice; but comparing Christ's precept with his pattern, we learn, 1. That in such cases we must not be our own avengers, nor judges in our own cause; we must rather receive than give the second blow, which makes the quarrel; we are allowed to defend ourselves, but not to avenge ourselves; the magistrate (if it be necessary for the preserving of the public peace, and the restraining and terrifying of evil doers) is to be the avenger, *Rom. xiii. 4.* 2. Our resentment of injuries done us must always be rational and never passionate; such Christ's here was; when he suffered he reasoned, but threatened not. He fairly expostulated with him that did him the injury, and so may we. 3. When we are called out to suffering, we must accommodate ourselves to the inconveniences of a suffering state with patience, and by one indignity done us be prepared to receive another, and to make the best of it.

Seventhly, While the servants were thus abusing him, Peter was proceeding to deny him, *ver. 25, 26, 27.* It is a sad story, and none of the least of Christ's sufferings.

1. He repeated the sin the second time, *ver. 25.* While he was warning himself with the servants, as one of them, they asked him, *Art not thou one of his disciples?* What dost thou here among us? He perhaps hearing that Christ was examined about his disciples, and fearing he should be seized, or at least smitten as his Master was, if he should own it, flatly denied it, and said, *I am not.*

2. It was his great folly, to thrust himself into the temptation, by continuing in the company of those that were unsuitable for him, and that he had nothing to do with. He stayed to warm himself; but they that warm themselves with evil-doers, grow cold towards good people and good things; and they that are fond of the devil's fire-side, are in danger of the devil's fire. Peter might have stood by his Master at the bar, and have warmed himself better than here, at the fire of his Master's love, which many waters could

could not quench, Cant. viii. 6, 7. He might there have warmed himself with zeal for his Master, and indignation at his prosecutors: but he chose rather to warm with them, than to warm against them. But how could one (one disciple) be warm alone? Eccl. iv. 11.

2. It was his great unhappiness that he was again assaulted by the temptation; and no other could be expected, for this was a place, this an hour of temptation. When the Judge asked Christ about his disciples, probably the servants took the hint, and challenged Peter for one of them, answer to thy name. See here, 1. The subtilty of the tempter in running down one whom he saw falling, and mustering a greater force against him; not a maid now, but all the servants. Note, Yielding to one temptation invites another, and perhaps a stronger; Satan redoubles his attacks when we give ground. 2. The danger of bad company. We commonly study to approve ourselves to those with whom we choose to associate ourselves; their good word we value ourselves by, and cover to stand right in their opinion. As we choose our people we choose our praise, and govern ourselves accordingly; and are therefore concerned to make the first choice well, and not to mingle ourselves with those whom we cannot please without displeasing God.

3. It was his great weakness, nay, it was his great wickedness, to yield to the temptation, and to say, *I am not one of his disciples*, as one ashamed of that which was his honour, and afraid of suffering for it, which would have been yet more to his honour. See how the fear of man brings a snare. When Christ was admired and caressed, and treated with respect, Peter pleased himself, and perhaps prided himself in this, that he was a disciple of Christ, and so put in for a share in the honours done his Master; but thus many who seem fond of the reputation of religion when it is in fashion, are ashamed of the reproach of it; but we must take it for better and worse.

2. He repeated the sin the third time, ver. 26, 27. Here he was attacked by one of the servants, that by the same token was kinsman to Malchus, and when he hears Peter deny himself to be a disciple of Christ, gives him the lie with great assurance, *Did not I see thee in the garden with him?* Witnesses his kinsman's ear: Peter then denied again, as if he knew nothing of Christ, nothing of the garden, nothing of all this matter.

1. This third assault of the temptation was more close than the former; before his relation to Christ was only suspected, here it is proved upon him by one that saw him with Jesus, and saw him draw his sword in his defence. Note, They who by sin think to help themselves out of trouble, do but intangle and embarrass themselves the more. Dare to be brave, for truth will out. A bird of the air may perhaps tell the matter which we seek to conceal with a lie. Notice is taken of this servant's being akin to Malchus, because that circumstance would make it the more a terror to Peter; now, thinks he, I am gone, my business is done, there needs no other witness or prosecutor. We should not, if we can help it, make any man in particular our enemy, because the time may come when either he or some of his relations may have us at their mercy: He that may need a friend should not make a foe. But observe, though here was sufficient evidence against Peter, and sufficient provocation given by his denial, to have prosecuted him, yet he escapes, has no harm done him, nor attempted to be done. Note, We are often drawn into sin by groundless causeless fears, which there is no occasion for, and which a small degree of wisdom and resolution would make nothing of.

2. His yielding to it was no less base than the former: *He denied again*. See here, 1. The nature of sin in general; *the heart is hardened by the deceitfulness of it*, Heb. iii. 13. It was a strange degree of effrontery that Peter was arrived to on a sudden, that he could with such assurance stand in a lie against so clear a disproof; but the beginning of sin is as the letting forth of water, when once the fence is broke, men easily go from bad to worse. 2. Of the sin of lying in particular; it is a fruitful sin, and upon that account exceeding sinful; one lie needs another to support it, and that another: It is a rule in the devil's politics, *male facta male factis tegere, ne perfluant*.

3. The hint given him for the awakening of his conscience was seasonable and happy; immediately the cock crew; and this is all that is here said of his repentance, it being recorded by the other evangelists. This brought him to himself, by bringing to his mind the word of Christ. See here, 1. The care Christ has of those that are his, notwithstanding their follies; though they fall, they are not utterly cast down, nor utterly cast off. 2. The advantage of having faithful remembrancers near us, that though they cannot tell us more than we know already, yet may mind us of that which we know, but have forgotten. The crowing of the cock to others was an accidental thing, and had no significance; but to Peter it was the voice of God, and had a blessed tendency to awaken his conscience, by putting him in mind of the word of Christ.

28. ¶ Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover. 29. Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? 30. They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would have not delivered him up unto thee. 31. Then Pilate said unto them, Take ye him and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: 32. That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die. 33. Then Pilate entered into the judgment-hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? 34. Jesus answered him, sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? 35. Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: What hast thou done? 36. Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. 37. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should

bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice. 38. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. 39. But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the king of the Jews? 40. Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

We have here an account of Christ's arraignment before Pilate, the Roman governor, in the *prætorium* (a Latin word made Greek) the prætor's house, or hall of judgment; thither they hurried him, to get him condemned in the Roman court, and executed by the Roman power. Being resolved on his death they took this course. 1. That he might be put to death the more legally and regularly, according to the present constitution of their government, since they became a province of the empire; not stoned in a popular tumult, as Stephen, but put to death with the present formalities of justice. Thus he was treated as a malefactor, being made *sen* for us. 2. That he might be put to death the more safely. If they could engage the Roman government in the matter, which the people stood in awe of, there would be little danger of an uproar. 3. That he might be put to death with more reproach to himself. The death of the cross, which the Romans commonly used, being of all other the most ignominious, they were desirous by it to put an indelible mark of infamy upon him, and to sink his reputation for ever. This therefore they harped upon, *Crucify him*. 4. That he might be put to death with less reproach to them. It was an invidious thing to put one to death that had done so much good in the world, and therefore they were willing to throw the odium upon the Roman government, to make that the less acceptable to the people, and save themselves from the reproach. Thus many are more afraid of the scandal of an ill thing than of the sin of it. See Acts v. 28.

Two things are here observed concerning the prosecution:

1. Their policy and industry in the prosecution; it was early; some think about two or three in the morning; others about five or six: when most people were in their beds; and so there would be the less danger of opposition from the people that were for Christ; while at the same time, they had their agents about, to call those together, whom they could influence to cry out against him. See how much their heart was upon it, and how violent they were in the prosecution! Now they had him in their hands, they would lose no time till they had him upon the cross, but denied themselves their natural rest to push on this matter! See Micah ii 1.

2. Their superstition and vile hypocrisy; the chief priests and elders, though they came along with the prisoner, that the thing might be done effectually, yet they went not into the judgment-hall, because it was the house of an uncircumcised Gentile, lest they should be defiled, but kept out of doors that they might eat the passover not the paschal lamb, that was eaten the night before, but the passover-feast, upon the sacrifices which were offered on the fifteenth day, to Chagigah, as they called it, the passover-bullocks, spoken of Deut. xvi. 2. 2 Chron. xxx. 24.—xxxv. 8, 9. These they were to eat of, and therefore would not go into the court for fear of touching a Gentile, and thereby contracting, not a legal, but only a traditional pollution: This they scrupled, but made no scruple of breaking through all the laws of equity to persecute Christ to the death: They strained at a gnat, and swallowed a camel.

Let us now see what passed at the judgment-hall: Here is,

First, Pilate's conference with the prosecutors, they are called first, and heard what they had to say against the prisoner, as was very fit, ver. 29—32.

(1.) The judge calls for the indictment. Because they would not come into the hall, he went out to them into the court before the house to talk with them. Looking upon Pilate as a magistrate, that we may give every one his due, here are three things commendable in him:

1. His diligent and close application to business. If it had been upon a good occasion, it had been very well that he was willing to be called up early to the judgment-seat. Men in public trusts must not love their ease.

2. His condescension to the humour of the people, and receding from the honour of his place to gratify their scruples. He might have said, If they be so nice as not to come in to me, let them go home as they came: by the same rule as we might say, if the complainant scruple to put off his hat to the magistrate, let not his complaint be heard; but Pilate insists not upon it, bears with them, and goes out to them; for when it is for good, we should become all things to all men.

3. His adherence to the rule of justice in demanding the accusation, suspecting the prosecution to be malicious: *What accusation bring ye against this man?* What is the crime you charge him with, and what proof have ye of it? It was a law of nature, before Valerius Publicola made it a Roman law: *Ne quis indicta causa condemnatur*. See Acts xxv. 16, 17. It is unreasonable to commit a man without alleging some cause in the warrant; and much more to arraign a man, when there is no bill of indictment found against him.

(2.) The prosecutors demand judgment against him upon a general surmise that he was a criminal; not alleging, much less proving, any thing in particular worthy of death or of bonds, ver. 30. *If he were not a malefactor, or evil-doer, we would not have delivered him to thee to be condemned*. This speaks them,

1. Very rude and uncivil to Pilate, a parcel of ill-natured men, that affected to despise dominion. When Pilate was so complaisant to them, as to come out to treat with them, yet they were to the highest degree out of humour with him. He put the most reasonable question to them that could be, but if it had been the most absurd, they could not have answered him with more disdain.

2. Very spiteful and malicious towards our Lord Jesus, right or wrong, they will have him to be a malefactor, and treated as one. We are to presume a man innocent till he is proved guilty, but they will presume him guilty who could prove himself innocent: They cannot say he is a traitor, a murderer, a felon, a breaker of the peace, but an evil-doer. He an evil-doer, who went about doing good! Let those be called whom he had cured and fed and taught; whom he had rescued from devils, and raised from death; and let them be asked whether he were an evil-doer or no? Note, It is no new thing for the best of benefactors to be branded and run down as the work of malefactors.

3. Very proud and conceited of themselves, and their own judgment and justice, as if their delivering a man up under the general character of a malefactor, were sufficient for the civil magistrate to ground a judicial sentence upon, than which what could be more haughty?

(3.) The judge remanded him to their own court, ver. 31. *Take ye him and judge him according to your own law, and do not trouble me with him*. Now,

excuse for joining with them. A little thing will draw those into bad company, that will be drawn to it by the love of a good life. If Peter's zeal for his Master had not frozen, but had continued in the heat it seemed to be of but a few hours before, he had not had occasion to warm himself now. Peter was much to be blamed.

1. Because he associated himself with these wicked men, and kept company with them. Doubtless they were diverting themselves with this night's expedition, scoffing at Christ, at what he had said, at what he had done, and triumphing in their victory over him; and what sort of entertainment would this give to Peter? If he said as they said, or by silence gave consent, he involved himself in sin; if not he exposed himself to danger. If Peter had not so much courage as to appear publicly for his Master, yet he might have had so much devotion as to retire into a corner, and weep in secret for his Master's sufferings, and his own sin in forsaking him; if he could not have done good, he might have kept out of the way of doing hurt. It is better to offend than appear to no purpose, or ill purpose.

2. Because he desired to be thought one of them, that he might not be suspected to be a disciple of Christ. Is this Peter? What a contradiction is this to the prayer of every good man, *gather not my soul among sinners. Saul among the prophets* is not so absurd as David among the Philistines. They that degenerate the lot of the fearful hereafter, should dread the *seat of the scornful now*. It is ill warming ourselves with those with whom we are in danger of burning ourselves, *Psal. cxi. 4.*

Fourthly, Peter, Christ's friend, having begun to deny him, the high-priest, his enemy, begins to accuse him, or rather urges him to accuse himself, *ver. 19, 20, 21.* It should seem the first attempt was to prove him a seducer and a teacher of false doctrine, which this evangelist relates; and when they failed in the proof of that, then they charged him with blasphemy, which is related by the other evangelists, and therefore omitted here. Observe,

1. The articles or heads upon which Christ was examined, *ver. 19.* concerning his disciples and his doctrine. Observe,

1. The irregularity of the process; it was against all law and equity; they seize him as a criminal, and now he is their prisoner, they have nothing to lay to his charge; no libel, no prosecutor; but the judge himself must be the prosecutor, and the prisoner himself the witness, and against all reason and justice is put on to be his own accuser.

2. The intention. The high-priest then, *ver. 19.* which seems to refer to *ver. 14.* because he had resolved that Christ must be sacrificed to their private malice under colour of the public good, therefore he examined him upon those interrogatories which would touch his life. He examined him,

1. Concerning his disciples, that he might charge him with sedition, and represent him as dangerous to the Roman government, as well as to the Jewish church. He asked him who were his disciples? What number they were? Of what country? What were their names and characters? Insinuating that his scholars were designed for soldiers, and would in time become a formidable body. Some think his question concerning his disciples was, what was now become of them all, where were they? And why did they not appear? upbraiding him with their cowardice in deserting him; thus adding to the affliction of it. There was something significant in this, that Christ's calling and owning his disciples was the first thing laid to his charge, but it was for their sakes that he sanctified himself and suffered.

2. Concerning his doctrine, that they might charge him with heresy, and bring him under the penalty of the law against false prophets, *Deut. xiii. 9, 10.* This was a matter properly cognizable in that court, *Deut. xxi. 12.* therefore a prophet could not perish but at Jerusalem, where that court sat. They could not prove any false doctrine upon him; but they hoped to extort something from him, which they might distort to his prejudice, and to make him an offender for some word or other. *Isa. xxix. 21.* They said nothing to him concerning his miracles, by which he had done so much good, and proved his doctrine beyond contradiction, because of these they were sure they could take no hold. Thus the adversaries of Christ, while they are industriously quarrelling with his truth, wilfully shut their eyes against the evidences of it, and take no notice of them.

3. The appeal Christ made in answer to these interrogatories. 1. As to his disciples he said nothing; because it was an impertinent question; if this doctrine was sound and good, his having disciples to communicate it, was no more than what was practised and allowed by their own doctors. If Galathas in asking him concerning his disciples, designed to ensnare them, and bring them into trouble, it was in kindness to them that he said nothing of them, for he had said, *Let these go their way.* If he meant to upbraid him with their cowardice, no wonder he said nothing, for *pudet hæc opprobria nobis, & dici potuissè & non potuissè refelli;* he would say nothing to condemn them, and could say nothing to justify them.

2. As to his doctrine he said nothing in particular, but in general referred himself to those that heard him, being not only made manifest to God, but made manifest also in their consciences, *ver. 20, 21.*

1. He tacitly charges his judges with illegal proceedings; he doth not indeed speak evil of the rulers of the people, nor say now to these princes, ye are wicked; but he appeals to the settled rules of their own court, whether they dealt fairly by him? *Do ye indeed judge righteously?* *Psal. lvi. 1.* So here, *Why ask ye me?* Which implies two absurdities in judgment: 1. *Why ask ye me now* concerning my doctrine, when you have already condemned it? They had made an order of court for the excommunicating of all that owned him, *chap. ix. 22.* had issued out a proclamation for the apprehending of him, and now they come to ask what his doctrine is? Thus was he condemned, as his doctrine and cause commonly are, unheard. 2. *Why ask ye me?* Must I accuse myself, when you have no evidence against me?

2. He insists upon his fair and open dealing with them in the publication of his doctrine, and justifies himself in that. The crime which the Sanhedrin by the law was to enquire after, was the clandestine spreading of dangerous doctrines, insinuating secretly, *Deut. xiii. 6.* As to this therefore Christ clears himself very fully.

1. As to the manner of his preaching, he spake openly, *παρρησια,* with freedom and plainness of speech; he did not deliver things ambiguously, as Apollo did his oracles; those that would understand the truth and spread scriptural notions, do it by fly-insinuations, putting queries, starting difficulties, and asserting nothing; but Christ explained himself fully with, *Verily, verily, I say unto you;* his reproofs were free and bold, and his testimonies express against the corruptions of the age.

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3. As to the places he preached in; when he was in the country, he preached ordinarily in the synagogues, the places of meeting for worship, and on the sabbath-day, the time of meeting; when he came up to Jerusalem, he preached the same doctrine in the temple at the time of the solemn feasts; when the Jews from all parts assembled there; though he often

preached in private houses, and on mountains, and by the sea-side, to shew that his word and worship were not to be confined to temples and synagogues; yet what he preached in private, was the very same with what he taught publicly. Note, The doctrine of Christ purely and plainly preached, need not be affirmed to be new in the most numerous assembly, for it carries its own strength and beauty along with it: What Christ's faithful ministers say, they would be willing all the world should hear; without error in the places of concourse, *1 Tim. i. 21.* — *Tit. 3. 13.*

4. As to the doctrine itself, he said nothing in secret contrary to what he said in public, but only by way of repetition and explication. *In secret have I said nothing;* as if he had been either suspicious of the truth of it, or conscious of any ill design in it. He sought no corners, for he feared no colours, nor said any thing that he need be ashamed of; what he did speak in private to his disciples, he ordered them to proclaim on the housetops, *Matt. x. 27.* God faith of him *Ist. xiv. 19. I have not spoken in secret;* his commandment is not hidden, *Deut. xxx. 11.* And the righteousness of faith speaks in like manner, *Rom. x. 5. Veritas nihil metuit nisi abscondi.* Tertullian.

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Sixthly, While the judges were examining him, the servants that stood by were abusing him, *ver. 22, 23.*

1. It was a base affront which one of the officers gave him; though he spoke with so much calmness and convincing evidence, this insolent fellow struck him with the palm of his hand, probably on the side of his head or face, saying, *Answerest thou the high-priest so?* As if he had behaved himself rudely to the court.

2. He struck him, *ἑρπετασε, he gave him a blow.* Some think it signifies a blow with a rod or wand, from *ερπετα*, or with the staff, which was the badge of his office. Now the scripture was fulfilled, *Ila. i. 8. I gave my cheeks, as *ερπετα*; so the Seventy, to blows, the word here used. And Mic. v. 1. They shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek; and the type answered, *Job xvi. 10. They have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully.* It was unjust to strike one that neither said nor did amiss; it was insolent for a mean servant to strike one that was confessedly a person of account; it was cowardly to strike one that had his hands tied, and barbarous to strike a prisoner at the bar. Here was a breach of the peace in the face of the court, and yet the judges countenanced it. Confusion of face was our due; but Christ here took it to himself; upon me be the curse, the shame.*

3. He checked him in a haughty imperious manner, *answerest thou the high-priest so?* As if the blessed Jesus were not good enough to speak to his master, or not wise enough to know how to speak to him, but like a rude and ignorant prisoner, must be controlled by the jailer, and taught how to behave himself.

Some of the ancients suggests that this officer was Malchus, who owed to Christ the healing of his ear, and the saving of his head, and yet made him this ill return. But whoever it was, it was done to please the high-priest, and to curry favour with him; for what he said, speaks a jealousy for the dignity of the high-priest. Wicked rulers will not want wicked servants, who will help forward the affliction of those whom their masters persecute. There was a successor of this high-priest that commanded the by-standers to smite Paul thus on the mouth, *Acts xxiii. 2.* Some think this officer took himself to be affronted by Christ's appeal to those about him concerning his doctrine, as if he would have vouched him to be a witness, and perhaps he was one of those officers that had spoken honourably of him, *John vi. 47.* and lest he should now be thought a secret friend to him, he thus appears a bitter enemy.

2. Christ bore this affront with wonderful meekness and patience, *ver. 23. If I have spoken evil, in what I have now said, bear witness of the evil.* Observe it to the court, and let them judge of it, who are the proper judges; but if well, and as it did become me, why smitest thou me? Christ could have answered him with a miracle of wrath, could have struck him dumb or dead, or have withered his hand that was lifted up against him. But this was the day of his patience and suffering, and he answered him with the meekness of wisdom, to teach us not to avenge ourselves; not to render railing for railing, but with the innocency of the dove, to bear injuries, even then when with the wisdom of the serpent, as our Saviour, we shew the justice of them, and appeal to the magistrate concerning them. Christ did not here turn the other cheek, by which it appears that that rule, *Matt. v. 39.* is not to be understood literally; a man may possibly turn the other cheek, and yet have his heart full of malice; but comparing Christ's precept with his pattern, we learn, 1. That in such cases we must not be our own avengers, nor judges in our own cause; we must rather receive than give the second blow, which makes the quarrel; we are allowed to defend ourselves, but not to avenge ourselves; the magistrate (if it be necessary for the preserving of the public peace, and the restraining and terrifying of evil doers) is to be the avenger, *Rom. xiii. 4.* 2. Our retaliation of injuries done us must always be rational and never passionate; such Christ's here was; when he suffered he reasoned, but threatened not. He fairly expostulated with him that did him the injury, and so may we. 3. When we are called out to suffering, we must accommodate ourselves to the inconveniences of a suffering state with patience, and by one indignity done us be prepared to receive another, and to make the best of it.

Sixthly, While the servants were thus abusing him, Peter was proceeding to deny him, *ver. 25, 26, 27.* It is a sad story, and none of the least of Christ's sufferings.

1. He repeated the sin the second time, *ver. 25.* While he was warning himself with the servants, as one of them, they asked him, *Art not thou one of his disciples?* What dost thou here among us? He perhaps hearing that Christ was examined about his disciples, and fearing he should be seized, or at least smitten as his Master was, if he should own it, flatly denied it, and said, *I am not.*

2. It was his great folly, to thrust himself into the temptation, by continuing in the company of those that were unfriendly to him, and that he had nothing to do with. He stayed to warm himself; but they that warm themselves with evil-doers, grow cold towards good people and good things; and they that are fond of the devil's fire-side, are in danger of the devil's fire. Peter might have stood by his Master at the bar, and have warmed himself better than here, at the fire of his Master's love, which many waters could

could not quench, Cant. viii. 6, 7. He might there have warmed himself with zeal for his Master, and indignation at his prosecutors: but he chose rather to warm with them, than to warm against them. But how could one (one disciple) be warm alone? Eccl. iv. 11.

2. It was his great unhappiness that he was again assaulted by the temptation; and no other could be expected, for this was a place, this an hour of temptation. When the Judge asked Christ about his disciples, probably the servants took the hint, and challenged Peter for one of them, answer to thy name. See here, 1. The subtlety of the tempter in running down one whom he saw falling, and mustering a greater force against him; not a maid now, but all the servants. Note, Yielding to one temptation invites another, and perhaps a stronger; Satan redoubles his attacks when we give ground. 2. The danger of bad company. We commonly study to approve ourselves to those with whom we choose to associate ourselves; their good word we value on ourselves by, and covet to stand right in their opinion. As we choose our people we choose our praise, and govern ourselves accordingly; and are therefore concerned to make the first choice well, and not to mingle ourselves with those whom we cannot please without displeasing God.

3. It was his great weakness, nay, it was his great wickedness, to yield to the temptation, and to say, *I am not one of his disciples*, as one ashamed of that which was his honour, and afraid of suffering for it, which would have been yet more to his honour. See how the fear of man brings a snare. When Christ was admired and caressed, and treated with respect, Peter pleased himself, and perhaps prided himself in this, that he was a disciple of Christ, and so put in for a share in the honours done his Master; but thus many who seem fond of the reputation of religion when it is in fashion, are ashamed of the reproach of it; but we must take it for better and worse.

2. He repeated the sin the third time, ver. 26, 27. Here he was attacked by one of the servants, that by the same token was kinsman to Malchus, and when he hears Peter deny himself to be a disciple of Christ, gives him the lie with great assurance, *Did not I see thee in the garden with him?* Witnesses my kinsman's ear: Peter then denied again, as if he knew nothing of Christ, nothing of the garden, nothing of all this matter.

1. This third assault of the temptation was more close than the former; before his relation to Christ was only suspected, here it is proved upon him by one that saw him with Jesus, and saw him draw his sword in his defence. Note, They who by sin think to help themselves out of trouble, do but inangle and embarrass themselves the more. Dare to be brave, for truth will out. A bird of the air may perhaps tell the matter which we seek to conceal with a lie. Notice is taken of this servant's being akin to Malchus, because that circumstance would make it the more a terror to Peter; now, thinks he, I am gone, my business is done, there needs no other witnesses or prosecutors. We should not, if we can help it, make any man in particular our enemy, because the time may come when either he or some of his relations may have us at their mercy: He that may need a friend should not make a foe. But observe, though here was sufficient evidence against Peter, and sufficient provocation given by his denial, to have prosecuted him, yet he escapes, has no harm done him, nor attempted to be done. Note, We are often drawn into sin by groundless causes, fears, which there is no occasion for, and which a small degree of wisdom and resolution would make nothing of.

2. His yielding to it was no less base than the former: *He denied again*. See here, 1. The nature of sin in general; *the heart is hardened by the deceitfulness of it*, Heb. iii. 13. It was a strange degree of effrontery that Peter was arrived to on a sudden, that he could with such assurance stand in a lie against so clear a disproof; but the beginning of sin is as the letting forth of water, when once the fence is broke, men easily go from bad to worse. 2. Of the sin of lying in particular; it is a fruitful sin, and upon that account exceeding sinful; one lie needs another to support it, and that another: It is a rule in the devil's politics, *male facta male factis tegere, ne perfluant*.

3. The hint given him for the awakening of his conscience was reasonable and happy; *immediately the cock crew*; and this is all that is here said of his repentance, it being recorded by the other evangelists. This brought him to himself, by bringing to his mind the word of Christ. See here, 1. The care Christ has of those that are his, notwithstanding their follies; though they fall, they are not utterly cast down, nor utterly cast off. 2. The advantage of having faithful remembrancers near us, that though they cannot tell us more than we know already, yet may mind us of that which we know, but have forgotten. The crowing of the cock to others was an accidental thing, and had no significance; but to Peter it was the voice of God, and had a blessed tendency to awaken his conscience, by putting him in mind of the word of Christ.

28. ¶ Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover. 29. Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? 30. They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would have not delivered him up unto thee. 31. Then Pilate said unto them, Take ye him and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: 32. That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die. 33. Then Pilate entered into the judgment-hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? 34. Jesus answered him, sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? 35. Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: What hast thou done? 36. Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. 37. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should

bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice. 38. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. 39. But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the king of the Jews? 40. Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

We have here an account of Christ's arraignment before Pilate, the Roman governor, in the *praetorium* (a Latin word made Greek) the praetor's house, or hall of judgment; thither they hurried him, to get him condemned in the Roman court, and executed by the Roman power. Being resolved on his death they took this course. 1. That he might be put to death the more legally and regularly, according to the present constitution of their government, since they became a province of the empire; not stoned in a popular tumult, as Stephen, but put to death with the present formalities of justice. Thus he was treated as a malefactor, being made *sen for us*. 2. That he might be put to death the more safely. If they could engage the Roman government in the matter, which the people stood in awe of, there would be little danger of an uproar. 3. That he might be put to death with more reproach to himself. The death of the cross, which the Romans commonly used, being of all other the most ignominious, they were desirous by it to put an indelible mark of infamy upon him, and to sink his reputation for ever. This therefore they harped upon, *Crucify him*. 4. That he might be put to death with less reproach to them. It was an invidious thing to put one to death that had done so much good in the world, and therefore they were willing to throw the odium upon the Roman government, to make that the less acceptable to the people, and save themselves from the reproach. Thus many are more afraid of the scandal of an ill thing than of the sin of it. See Acts v. 28.

Two things are here observed concerning the prosecution:

1. Their policy and industry in the prosecution; it was early; some think about two or three in the morning; others about five or six: when most people were in their beds; and so there would be the less danger of opposition from the people that were for Christ; while at the same time, they had their agents about, to call those together, whom they could influence to cry out against him. See how much their heart was upon it, and how violent they were in the prosecution! Now they had him in their hands, they would lose no time till they had him upon the cross, but denied themselves their natural rest to push on this matter! See Micah ii. 1.

2. Their superstition and vile hypocrisy; the chief priests and elders, though they came along with the prisoner, that the thing might be done effectually, yet they went not into the judgment-hall, because it was the house of an uncircumcised Gentile, lest they should be defiled, but kept out of doors that they might eat the passover nor the paschal lamb, that was eaten the night before, but the passover-feast, upon the sacrifices which were offered on the fifteenth day, to Chagigah, as they called it, the passover-butlocks, spoken of Deut. xvi. 2. 2 Chron. xxx. 24.—xxxv. 8, 9. These they were to eat of, and therefore would not go into the court for fear of touching a Gentile, and thereby contracting, not a legal, but only a traditional pollution: This they scrupled, but made no scruple of breaking through all the laws of equity to persecute Christ to the death: They strained at a gnat, and swallowed a camel.

Let us now see what passed at the judgment-hall: Here is,

First, Pilate's conference with the prosecutors, they are called first, and heard what they had to say against the prisoner, as was very fit, ver. 29—32.

(1.) The judge calls for the indictment. Because they would not come into the hall, he went out to them into the court before the house to talk with them. Looking upon Pilate as a magistrate, that we may give every one his due, here are three things commendable in him:

1. His diligent and close application to business. If it had been upon a good occasion, it had been very well that he was willing to be called up early to the judgment-seat. Men in public trusts must love their ease.

2. His consideration to the honour of the people, and receding from the honour of his place to gratify their scruples. He might have said, If they be so nice as not to come in to me, let them go home as they came: by the same rule as we might say, if the complaint scruple to put off his hat to the magistrate, let not his complaint be heard: but Pilate insists not upon it, bears with them, and goes out to them; for when it is for good, we should become all things to all men.

3. His adherence to the rule of justice in demanding the accusation, suspecting the prosecution to be malicious: *What accusation bring ye against this man?* What is the crime you charge him with, and what proof have ye of it? It was a law of nature, before Valerius Publicola made it a Roman law: *Ne quis inducta causa condemnetur*. See Acts xxi. 16, 17. It is unreasonable to commit a man without alleging some cause in the warrant; and much more to arraign a man, when there is no bill of indictment found against him.

(2.) The prosecutors demand judgment against him upon a general surmise that he was a criminal; not alleging, much less proving, any thing in particular worthy of death or of bonds, ver. 30. *If he were not a malefactor, or evil-doer, we would not have delivered him to thee to be condemned*. This speaks them.

1. Very rude and uncivil to Pilate, a parcel of ill-natured men, that affected to despise dominion. When Pilate was so complaisant to them, as to come out to treat with them, yet they were to the highest degree out of humour with him. He put the most reasonable question to them that could be, but if it had been the most absurd, they could not have answered him with more disdain.

2. Very spiteful and malicious towards our Lord Jesus, right or wrong, they will have him to be a malefactor, and treated as one. We are to presume a man innocent till he is proved guilty, but they will presume him guilty who could prove himself innocent: They cannot say he is a traitor, a murderer, a felon, a breaker of the peace, but an evil-doer. He an evil-doer, who went about doing good! Let those be called whom he had cured and fed and taught; whom he had rescued from devils, and raised from death; and let them be asked whether he were an evil-doer or no? Note, It is no new thing for the best of benefactors to be branded and run down as the worst of malefactors.

3. Very proud and conceited of themselves, and their own judgment and justice, as if their delivering a man up under the general character of a malefactor, were sufficient for the civil magistrate to ground a judicial sentence upon, than which what could be more haughty?

(3.) The judge remanded him to their own court, ver. 31. *Take ye him and judge him according to your own law, and do not trouble me with him*. Now,

1. Some think Pilate herein complimented them, acknowledging the remains of their power, and allowing them to exert it. Corporal punishment they might inflict, as *scourging in their synagogues*; but whether capital or no, is uncertain; but, saith Pilate, go as far as *your law* will allow you, and if you go further it shall be connived at. This he said, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, but unwilling to do them the service they required.

2. Others think he bantered them, and upbraided them with their present state of weakness and subjection: They would be the sole judges of the guilt; pray, saith Pilate, if you will be so, go on as you have begun; you have found him guilty by *your own law*, condemn him, if you dare, by *your own law*, to carry on the humour. Nothing is more absurd, nor more deserves to be exposed, than for those to pretend to dictate and boast of their wisdom, who are weak and underlings, and whose lot it is to be dictated to. Some think Pilate here reflects upon the law of Moses, as if that allowed them to do that which the Roman law would by no means allow, the judging of a man unheard: It may be *your law* will suffer such a thing, but ours will not. Thus, through their corruptions, the law of God was blasphemed; and so is his gospel too.

(4.) They disowned any authority as judges, and (since it must be so) are content to be prosecutors: They now grow less insolent, and more submissive, and own, *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death*, whatever Jesus punishment we may inflict, and this is a *malefactor* whom we would have the blood of.

1. Some think they had lost their power to give judgment in matters of life and death, only by their own carelessness and cowardly yielding to the darling iniquities of the age; so Dr. Lightfoot. *ex æquo*, *It is not in our power to pass sentence of death upon any*; if we do, we shall have the mob about our ears presently.

2. Others think their power was taken from them by the Romans, because they had not used it well, or because it was thought too great a trust to be lodged in the hands of a conquered and yet an unsubdued people. Their acknowledgment of this they designed for a compliment to Pilate, and to atone for their rudeness, *ver. 30.* but it amounts to a full evidence that *the sceptre was departed from Judah*, and therefore now the Messiah was to come, *Gen. xlix. 10.* If the Jews have no power to put any man to death, where is the sceptre? Yet they ask not where is the *Shiloh*?

3. However there was a providence in it, that either they should have no power to put any man to death, or should decline the exercise put upon this occasion, *That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die, ver. 32.* Observe,

(1.) In general, that even they who designed the defeating of Christ's sayings, beyond their intention, were made serviceable to the fulfilling of them by an over-ruling hand of God. *No word of Christ shall fall to the ground*; he can never either deceive or be deceived: Even the chief priests, while they persecuted him as a deceiver, had their spirits so directed as to help to prove him true, when we would think, by taking other measures, they might have defeated his predictions: *Howbeit they mean not so, Isa. x. 7.*

(2.) Those sayings of Christ in particular were fulfilled, which he had spoken concerning his own death. Two sayings of Christ concerning his death were fulfilled, by the Jews declining to judge him according to their law. 1. He had said that he should be delivered to the Gentiles, and that they should put him to death, *Matt. xx. 11. Mark x. 33. Luke xviii. 32.* and hereby that saying was fulfilled. 2. He had said that he should be crucified, *Matt. xx. 19.—xxvi. 2. lifted up, John iii. 14.—xii. 32.* Now if they had judged him by their law, he had been stoned; burning, strangling, and beheading, were in some cases used among the Jews, but never crucifying. It was therefore necessary Christ should be put to death by the Romans, that, being hanged upon a tree, he might be made a curse for us, *Gal. iii. 13.* and his hands and feet might be pierced: As the Roman power had brought him to be born at Bethlehem, so now to die upon a cross, and both according to the scriptures. It is likewise determined concerning us, though not discovered to us what death we shall die, which should free us from all disquieting fears about that matter; Lord, what, and when, and how thou hast appointed.

Secondly, Here is Pilate's conference with the prisoner, *ver. 35, &c.* where we have,

1. The prisoner set to the bar; Pilate, after he had conferred with the chief priests at his door, entered into the hall, and called for Jesus to be brought in: He would not examine him in the crowd, where he might be disturbed by the noise, but ordered him to be brought into the hall; for he made no difficulty of going in among the Gentiles. We by sin were become liable to the judgment of God, and were to be brought before his bar, therefore, *Christ being made sin, and a curse for us*, was arraigned as a criminal. Pilate entered into judgment with him, that God might not enter into judgment with us.

2. His examination. The other evangelists tell us, that his accusers had laid it to his charge, that he perverted the nation, forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and upon this he is examined.

(1.) Here is a question put to him with a design to ensnare him, and to find out something upon which to ground an accusation: *Art thou the king of the Jews?* *ἡ βασιλεία*, that king of the Jews that has been so much talked of, and so long expected? Messiah the Prince; art thou he? i. e. Dost thou pretend to be he? Dost thou call thyself; and wouldst thou be thought so? For he was far from imagining that really he was so, or making a question of that. Some think Pilate asked this with an air of scorn and contempt: What! *Art thou a king*, that makest so mean a figure? *Art thou the king of the Jews*, by whom thou art thus hated and persecuted? *Art thou king de jure*, while the emperor is only king *de facto*? Since it could not be proved he ever said it, he would constrain him to say it now, that he might proceed upon his own confession.

(2.) Christ answers this question with another; not for evasion, but as an intimation to Pilate to consider what he did, and upon what grounds he went, *ver. 34. Sayest thou this thing of thyself*, from a suspicion arising in thy own breast, or did others tell it thee of me, and dost thou ask it only to oblige them?

1. It is plain thou hast no reason to say that of thyself. Pilate was obliged by his office to take care of the interest of the Roman government, but he could not say that that was in any danger, or suffered any damage by any thing our Lord Jesus had ever said or done. He never appeared in worldly pomp, never assumed any secular power, never acted as a judge or divider, never were any traitorous principles or practices objected to him, nor any thing that might give the least umbrage or suspicion.

2. If others tell it thee of me, to incense thee against me, thou oughtest to consider who they are, and upon what principles they go, and whether they who represented him as an enemy to Cæsar, were not really such themselves, and therefore used this only as a pretence to cover their malice; which, if so, ought to be well weighed by a judge that would do justice: Nay, if Pilate had been as inquisitive as he ought to have been in this matter, he would have found that the true reason why the chief priests were outrageous against

Jesus was, because he did not set up a temporal kingdom in opposition to the Roman power; if he would have done that, and would have wrought miracles to bring them out of the Roman bondage, as Moses did to bring them out of the Egyptian, they would have been so far from siding with the Romans against him, that they would have made him their king, and have fought under him against the Romans; but he not answering this expectation of theirs, they charged that upon him which they were themselves most notoriously guilty of, disaffection to and design against the present government; and was an information as this fit to be countenanced?

(3.) Pilate reflects Christ's answer, and takes it very heinously, *ver. 35.* This is a direct answer to Christ's question, *ver. 34.*

1. Christ had asked him, whether he had spoke of himself? No, saith he, *Am I Jew*, that thou suspected me to be in the plot against thee? I know nothing of the Messiah, nor desire to know, and therefore interest not myself in the dispute who is the Messiah, and who not, it is all alike to me. Observe with what disdain Pilate asks, *Am I Jew?* The Jews were, upon many accounts, an honourable people; but having corrupted the covenant of their God, he made them contemptible and base before all the people, *Mal. ii. 8, 9.* so that a man of sense and honour reckoned it a scandal to be counted a Jew. Thus good names often suffer for the sake of the ill men that wear them. It is said that, when a Turk is suspected of dishonesty, he would ask, *What! Do you take me for a Christian?*

2. Christ had asked him, whether others told him; yes, saith he, and those *thine own people*, that one would think should be biased in favour of thee and the priests, whose testimony, *in verbum sacerdotis*, ought to be regarded, and therefore I have nothing to do but to proceed upon their information. Thus Christ, in the religion, still suffers by those that are of his own nation, even the priests, that profess relation to him, but do not live up to their profession.

3. Christ had declined answering that question, *Art thou the king of the Jews?* And therefore Pilate puts another question to him more general, *What hast thou done?* What provocation hast thou given to thy own nation, and particularly the priests, to be so violent against thee? Surely there cannot be all this smoke but there is some fire, what is it?

(4.) Christ, in his next reply, gives a more full and direct answer to Pilate's former question, *Art thou a king?* Explaining in what sense he was a king, but not such a king as was any ways dangerous to the Roman government, not a secular king, for his interest was not supported by secular methods, *ver. 36.* Observe,

1. An account of the nature and constitution of Christ's kingdom; it is not of the world: it is expressed negatively what it is not, to rectify the present mistakes concerning it; but the positive is implied, it is the kingdom of heaven, and belongs to another world; he is a king, and has a kingdom, but not of this world. 1. Its rise is not from this world; the kingdoms of men arise out of the sea and the earth, *Dan. vii. 3. Rev. xiii. 1—11.* but the holy city comes down from God out of heaven, *Rev. xxi. 2.* his kingdom is not by succession, election, or conquest, but by the immediate and special designation of the divine will and counsel. Its nature is not worldly, it is a kingdom within men, *Luke xvii. 21.* set up in their hearts and consciences, *Rom. xiv. 17.* its riches spiritual, powers spiritual, and all its glory within. The ministers of state in Christ's kingdom have not the spirit of the world, *1 Cor. ii. 42.* 3. Its guards and supports are not worldly, its weapons spiritual; it needed not, nor used, secular force to maintain and advance it, nor was it carried on in a way hurtful to kings or provinces; it did not in the least interfere with the prerogatives of princes, or the properties of their subjects; it tended not to alter any national establishment in secular things, nor opposed any kingdom but that of sin and Satan. 4. Its tendency and design is not worldly; Christ aimed not, nor would allow his disciples to aim at the pomp and power of the great men of the earth. 5. Its subjects, though they are in the world, yet are not of the world; they are called and chosen out of the world, are born from and bound for another world: they are neither the world's pupils, nor its darlings; neither governed by its wisdom, nor enriched with its wealth.

2. An evidence of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom produced: If he had designed an opposition to the government, he would have fought them at their own weapons, and would have repelled force with force of the same nature: but he did not take this course: *If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews, and my kingdom be ruined by them.* But, 1. His followers did not offer to fight, there was no uproar, no attempts to rescue him, though the town was now full of Galileans, his friends and countrymen, and they generally armed; but the peaceable behaviour of his disciples on this occasion, was enough to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. 2. He did not order them to fight; nay, he forbade them; which was an evidence, both that he did not depend upon worldly aids, for he could have summoned legions of angels into his service, which shewed that his kingdom was from above, as also that he did not dread worldly opposition, for he was very willing to be delivered to the Jews, as knowing that that which would have been the destruction of any worldly kingdom, would be the advancement and establishment of his; justly therefore doth he conclude, *now you may see my kingdom is not from hence; in the world, but not of it.*

5. In answer to Pilate's further query, he replies yet more directly, *ver. 37.* where we have,

1. Pilate's plain question, *Art thou a king then?* Thou speakest of a kingdom thou hast, *art thou then*, in any sense, a king? And what colour hast thou for such a claim? Explain thyself.

2. The good confession which our Lord Jesus witnessed before Pontius Pilate, in answer to this, *1 Tim. vi. 13. Thou sayest that I am a king.* i. e. it is as thou sayest, I am a king; for I came to bear witness of the truth.

(1.) He grants himself to be a king, though not in the sense that Pilate meant it: The Messiah was expected under the character of a king, Messiah the prince, and therefore have owned to Caiaphas that he was the Christ, he would not disown to Pilate that he was a king, lest he should seem inconsistent with himself. Note, Though Christ took upon him the form of a servant, yet even then he justly claimed the honour and authority of a king.

(2.) He explains himself, and shews how he is a king, as he came to bear witness of the truth; he rules in the minds of men by the power of truth. If he had meant himself a temporal prince, he would have said, *For this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world*, to rule the nations, to conquer kings, and take possession of kingdoms; no, he came to be a witness, to witness for the God that made the world, and against sin that ruins the world, and by this word of his testimony he sets up and keeps up his kingdom. It was foretold that he should be a witness to the people, and, as such a leader and commander to the people, *Isa. lv. 4. Christ's kingdom was not of this world*, in which truth faileth, *Isa. lix. 15. Qui nescit dissimulare, nescit regnare*: but of that world in which truth reigns eternally: Christ's errand into the world, and his business in the world, was to bear witness to the truth: 1. To reveal it, to discover to the world that which otherwise could not have been known concerning God and his will, and good-will to men. *John i. 18.—xvii. 26.* 2. To confirm it, *Rom. xv. 9.* By his miracles he bore witness to the truth of religion, the truth of divine revelation, and of God's pro-

fessions and providence, and the truth of his promise and covenant, that all men through him might believe. Now by doing this he is a king, and sets up a kingdom.

1. The foundation and power, the spirit and genius of Christ's kingdom is truth, divine truth: When he said, *I am the truth*, he said, in effect, *I am a king*: He conquers by the convincing evidence of truth, he rules by the commanding power of truth, and in his majesty rides prosperously, because of truth, Psalm xlv. 4. It is with his truth that he shall judge the people, Psalm xvi. 13. It is the sceptre of his kingdom; he draws with the cords of a man, i.e. with truth revealed to us, and received by us, in the love of it; and thus he brings thoughts into obedience: He came a light in the world, and rules as the sun by day.

2. The subjects of this kingdom are those that are of the truth. All that by the grace of God, are rescued from under the power of the father of lies, and are disposed to receive the truth, and submit to the power and influence of it, will hear Christ's voice, i.e. will become his subjects, and will bear faith and true allegiance to him. Every one that has any real sense of true religion, will entertain the Christian religion, and they belong to his kingdom; by the power of truth he makes them willing, Psalm cx. 3. All that are in love with truth, will hear the voice of Christ, for greater, better, finer, sweeter truths can no where be found, than are found in Christ, by whom grace and truth come; so that by hearing Christ's voice, we know that we are of the truth, 1 John iii. 19.

(6.) Pilate hereupon puts a good question to him, but doth not stay for an answer, ver. 38. He said, *What is truth?* and immediately went out again.

1. It is certain this was a good question, and could not be put to one that was better able to answer it. Truth is that pearl of great price which the human understanding has a desire to, and is in quest of; for it cannot rest but in that which is, or at least is apprehended to be truth. When we search the scriptures, and attend the ministry of the word, it must be with this enquiry, *What is truth?* and with this prayer, *Lead me in thy truth; into all truth.* But many put this question that have not patience and constancy enough to persevere in their search after truth; or not humility and sincerity enough to receive it when they have found it, 2 Tim. iii. 7. Thus many deal with their own consciences, they ask them those needful questions, *What am I? What have I done?* but will not take time for an answer.

2. It is uncertain with what design Pilate asked this question.

(1.) Perhaps he spoke it as a learner, as one that began to think well of Christ, and to look upon him with some respect, and desired to be informed what new notions he advanced, and what improvements he pretended to in religion and learning: But while he desired to hear some new truth from him, as Herod, to see some miracle, the clamour and outrage of the priests' mob at his gate obliged him abruptly to let fall the discourse.

(2.) Some think he speaks it as a judge, enquiring further into the cause now brought before him; let me into this mystery, and prithee tell me what the truth of it is, the true state of this matter.

(3.) Others think he speaks it as a scoffer, in a jeering way. Thou talkest of truth, canst thou tell what truth is? or give me a definition of it? Thus he makes a jest of the everlasting gospel, that great truth, which the chief priests hated and persecuted, and which Christ was now witnessing to and suffering for; and, like men of no religion, who take a pleasure in bantering all religions, he ridicules both sides; and therefore Christ made him no reply: Answer not a fool according to his folly; cast not pearls before swine. But though Christ would not tell Pilate what is truth, he has told his disciples, and by them he has told us, John xiv. 6.

Thirdly, The result of both these conferences with the prosecutors and the prisoner, ver. 38, 39, 40. in two things:

1. The judge appeared his friend, and favourable to him, for,

(1.) He publicly declared him innocent, ver. 38. upon the whole matter. *I find in him no fault at all.* He supposeth there might be some controversy in religion between him and them, wherein he was as likely to be in the right as they, but nothing criminal appears against him. This solemn declaration of Christ's innocence, was, 1. For the justification and honour of the Lord Jesus: By this it appears, that though he was treated as the worst of malefactors, he had never merited such treatment. 2. For the explaining of the design and intention of his death: That he did not die for any sin of his own, even in the judgment of the judge himself, and therefore he died as a sacrifice for our sins, and that even in the judgment of the prosecutors themselves, that one man should die for the people, John xi. 50. This is he that did no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth, Isa. liii. 9. who was to be cut off, but not for himself, Dan. ix. 26. 3. For the aggravating of the sin of the Jews that prosecuted him with so much violence. If a prisoner have had a fair trial, and has been acquitted by those that are proper judges of the crime, especially if there be no cause to suspect them partial in his favour, he must be believed innocent, and his accusers are bound to acquiesce. But our Lord Jesus, though brought in not guilty, is still run down as a malefactor, and his blood thirsted for.

(2.) He proposed an expedient for his discharge, ver. 39. *You have a custom that I should release you a prisoner at the passover, shall it be this king of the Jews?* He proposed this, not to the chief priests, he knew they would never agree to it, but to the multitude; it was an appeal to the people, as appears, Matt. xxvii. 15. Probably, he had heard how this Jesus had been attended but the other day with the hosannas of the common people, he therefore looked upon him to be the darling of the multitude, and the envy only of the rulers, and therefore he made no doubt but they would demand the release of Jesus, and that would stop the mouths of the prosecutors, and all would be well.

1. He allows their custom, for which, perhaps, they had a long prescription, in honour of the passover, which was a memorial of their release: But it was adding to God's words, as if he had not instituted enough for the due commemoration of that deliverance, and, though an act of mercy, might be injustice to the public, Prov. xvii. 15.

2. He offers to release Jesus to them according to the custom. If Pilate had had the honesty and courage that became a judge, he should not have named an innocent person to be competitor with a notorious criminal for this favour; if he found no fault in him, he was bound in conscience to discharge him: But he was willing to trim the matter, and please all sides; and was governed more by worldly wisdom than by the rules of equity.

2. The people appeared his enemies, and implacable against him, ver. 40. *They cried all again, and again, Not this man, let not him be released, but Barabbas.* Observe,

(1.) How fierce and outrageous they were: Pilate proposed the thing to them calmly, as worthy their mature consideration, but they resolved it in a heat, and gave in their resolution with clamour and noise; and in the utmost confusion. Note, the enemies of Christ's holy religion cry it down, and so hope to run it down: witness the outcry of Ephesus, Acts, xix. 34. But those who think the worse of things or persons, merely for their being thus exclaimed against, have a very small share of constancy and consideration: Nay, there is cause to suspect a deficiency of reason and justice on that side which calls in the assistance of popular tumult.

(2.) How foolish and absurd they were, intimated in the short account here given of the other candidate: *Now Barabbas was a robber; and there-*

fore, 1. A breaker of the law of God; and yet he shall be spared, rather than one who reproved the pride, avarice, and tyranny of the priests and elders: Though Barabbas be a robber, he will not rob them of Moses's seat, nor of their traditions, and then no matter. 2. He is an enemy to the public safety, and personal property: The clamour of the town uses to be against robbers, Job xxx. 5. *Men cried after them as after a thief*, yet here it is for one: Thus they do who prefer their sins before Christ: Sin is a robber, every base lust is a robber, and yet foolishly chosen rather than Christ, who would truly enrich us.

C H A P. XIX.

Though in the history hitherto this evangelist seems industriously to have declined the recording of such passages as had been related by the other evangelists, yet when he comes to the sufferings and death of Christ, instead of passing them over as one ashamed of his Master's chain and cross, and looking upon them as the blemishes of his story; there he repeats what had been before related, with considerable enlargements, as one that desired to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified; to glory in nothing save in the cross of Christ. In the story of this chapter we have, 1. The remainder of Christ's trial before Pilate, which was tumultuous and confused, ver. 1—15. 2. Sentence given, and execution done upon it, ver. 16—18. 3. The title over his head, ver. 19—22. 4. The parting of his garment, ver. 23, 24. 5. The care he took of his mother, ver. 25—27. 6. The giving him vinegar to drink, ver. 28, 29. 7. His dying word, ver. 30. 8. The piercing of his side, ver. 31—37. 9. The burial of his body, ver. 38—42. O that in meditating on these things, we may experimentally know the power of Christ's death, and the fellowship of his sufferings.

1. THEN Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. 2. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, 3. And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. 4. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 5. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! 6. When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. 7. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. 8. ¶ When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; 9. And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. 10. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? 11. Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. 13. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar. 13. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your king! 15. But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar.

Here is a further account of the unfair trial which they gave to our Lord Jesus. The prosecutors carrying it on with great confusion among the people, the judge with great confusion in his own breast, between both the narrative is such as is not easily reduced to a method; we must therefore take the parts of it as they lie.

First, The judge abuseth the prisoner, though he declares him innocent; and hopes therewith to pacify the prosecutors; wherein his intention, if indeed it were good, will by no means justify his proceedings, which were probably unjust.

(1.) He ordered him to be whipped as a criminal, ver. 1. Pilate, seeing the people so outrageous, and being disappointed in his project of releasing him upon the people's choice, took Jesus, and scourged him, i.e. appointed the lictors that attended him to do it. Bede is of opinion, that Pilate scourged Jesus himself with his own hands, because it is said, he took him and scourged him, that it might be done favourably. Matthew and Mark mention his scourging after his condemnation, but here it appears to have been before. St. Luke speaks of Pilate's offering to chastise him, and let him go; which must be before sentence. The scourging of him was designed only to pacify the Jews, and in it Pilate put a compliment upon them, that he would take their word against his own sentiments so far. The Roman scourgings were ordinarily very severe, not limited, as among the Jews, to forty stripes; yet this pain and shame Christ submitted to for our sakes:

1. That the scriptures might be fulfilled, which spake of his being stricken, smitten, and afflicted, and the chastisement of our peace being upon him, Isa. liii. 4. Of his giving his back to the smiters, Isa. l. 6. Of the ploughers ploughing upon his back, Psalm cxxix. 3. He himself likewise had foretold it, Matt. xx. 19. Mark x. 34. Luke xviii. 32.

2. That by his stripes we may be healed, 1 Pet. ii. 24. We deserved to have been chastised with whips and scorpions, and to be beaten with many stripes,

stripes, having known our Lord's will and not done it, but Christ underwent the stripes for us, bearing *the rod of his Father's wrath*, Lam. iii. 1. Pilate's design in scourging him was, that he might not be condemned, which did not take effect, but intimated what was God's design, that his being scourged might prevent our being condemned, we having fellowship in his sufferings, and that did take effect: The physician *scourged*, and so the patient *healed*.

3. That *stripes*, for his sake, might be sanctified and made easy to his followers; and they might, as they did, rejoice in that shame, *Acts v. 40—xvi. 22*, as Paul did, who was in *stripes above measure*, 2 Cor. xi. 23. Christ's stripes take out the sting of theirs, and alter the property of them. *We are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world*, 1 Cor. xi. 32.

(2.) He turned him over to his soldiers to be ridiculed and made sport with as a fool, *ver. 2, 3*. The soldiers, that were the governor's life-guard, put a crown of thorns upon his head; such a crown fitted for such a king; they put on him a purple robe, some old threadbare coat of that colour, which they thought good enough to be the badge of his royalty; and they complimented him with, *Hail, king of the Jews*, like people like king, and then smote him with their hands.

1. See here the baseness and injustice of Pilate, that he would suffer one whom he believed an innocent person, and if so, an excellent person, to be thus abused and trampled on by his own servants. They who are under the arrest of the law, ought to be under the protection of it; and their being secured is to be their security. But Pilate did this, 1. To oblige his soldiers' merry humour, and perhaps his own too, notwithstanding the gravity one might have expected in a judge; *Herod*, as well as his men of war, had just before done the same, *Luke xxiii. 11*. It was as good as a stage-play to them, now it was a festival time; as the Philistines made sport with Sampson. 2. To oblige the Jews' malicious humour, and to gratify them who desired that all possible disgrace might be done to Christ, and the utmost indignities put upon him.

2. See here the rudeness and insolence of the soldiers, how perfectly lost they were to all justice and humanity, who could thus triumph over a man in misery, and one that had been in reputation for wisdom and honour, and never did any thing to forfeit it. But thus bath Christ's holy religion been basely misrepresented, dressed up by ill men at their pleasure, and so exposed to contempt and ridicule, as Christ was here. 1. They clothe him with a mock-robe, as if it were a shame and a jest, and nothing but the product of a heated fancy and a crazy imagination. And as Christ is here represented a king in conceit only, so is his religion as a concern in conceit only, and God and the soul, sin and duty, heaven and hell, are with them all chimeras. 2. They crown it with thorns, as if it were a perfect penance; and the greatest pain and hardship in the world; as if to submit to the conduct of God and conscience were to thrust one's head into a thicket of thorns, but this is an unjust imputation; *thorns and snares are in the way of the froward*, but roses and laurels in religious ways.

3. See here the wonderful defence of our Lord Jesus in his sufferings for us. Great and generous minds can bear any thing better than ignominy; any toil, any pain, any loss, rather than reproach; yet this the great and holy Jesus submitted to for us. See and admire, 1. The *invincible patience of a sufferer*, leaving us an example of contentment and courage, evenness, and endless of spirit under the greatest hardships we may meet with in the way of duty. 2. The *invincible love and kindness of a Saviour*; who not only cheerfully and resolutely went through all this, but voluntarily undertook it for us and for our salvation. Herein he commended his love, that he would not only die for us, but die as a fool dies. 1. He endured the pain; not the pangs of death only, though in the death of the cross those were most exquisite; but as if those were too little, he submitted to those previous pains. Shall we complain of a thorn in the flesh, and of being buffeted by affliction, because we need it to hide pride from us, when Christ humbled himself to bear those thorns in the head, and those buffetings to face and teach us? 2 Cor. xii. 7. 2. He despised the shame, the shame of a fool's coat, and the mock respects paid him, *Hail, king of the Jews*. If we be at any time ridiculed for well doing, let us not be ashamed but glorify God, for thus we are partakers of Christ's sufferings. He that bore those *shame honours*, was recompensed with *real honours*, and so shall we, if we patiently suffer shame for him.

Secondly, Pilate having thus abused the prisoner, presents him to the prosecutors, in hopes they would now be satisfied and drop the prosecution, *ver. 4, 5*. Here he proposeth two things to their consideration,

1. That he had not found any thing in him which made him obnoxious to the Roman government, *ver. 4*. *I find no fault in him: sed quæ accusas apponam. I do not find in him the least fault, or cause of accusation*. Upon further enquiry he repeats the declaration he had made, *chap. xviii. 38*. Hereby he condemns himself; if he found no fault in him, why did he scourge him? Why did he suffer him to be abused? None ought to suffer ill but those that do ill; yet thus many banter and abuse religion, who yet, if they be serious, cannot but own they find no fault in it. If he found no fault in him, why did he bring him out to his prosecutors, and not immediately release him, as he ought to do? If Pilate would have consulted his own conscience only, he had neither scourged Christ nor crucified him; but thinking to trim the matter, to please the people by scourging Christ, and save his conscience by not crucifying him, behold he doth both; whereas, if he had at first resolved to crucify him, he needed not have scourged him. It is common for those, who think to keep themselves from greater sins by venturing upon lesser sins, to run into both.

2. That he had done that to him which would make him the less dangerous to them and to their government, *ver. 5*. He brought him out to them wearing the crown of thorns, his head and face all bloody, and said, *behold the man whom you are so jealous of; intimidating*, that though his having been so popular might have given them some cause to fear that his interest in the country would lessen theirs, yet that he had taken an effectual course to prevent it, by treating him as a slave, and exposing him to contempt, after which he supposed the people would never look upon him with any respect, nor could he ever retrieve his reputation again. Little did Pilate think with what veneration even these sufferings of Christ would in after ages be commemorated by the best and greatest of men, who would glory in that cross and those stripes which he thought would have been to him and his followers a perpetual and indelible reproach.

1. Observe here how our Lord Jesus shows himself dressed up in all the marks of ignominy. He came forth willing to be made a spectacle, and to be hooted at, as no doubt he was, when he came forth in this garb, knowing that he was set for a sign that should be spoken against, *Luke ii. 34*. Did he go forth thus bearing our reproach, let us go forth to him bearing his reproach, *Heb. xiii. 13*.

2. How Pilate shows him: *Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man*. He saith unto them, so the original is; and the immediate antecedent being Jesus, I see no inconvenience in supposing these to be Christ's own words: he said, *behold the man you are so exasperated against*: But some of the Greek copies, and the generality of the translators supply it as we do, *Pilate*

saith unto them, with a design to qualify them, *behold the man*; not so much to move their pity, *behold a man who thy your compassion*, as to silence their jealousies, *behold a man not worthy your suspicion*; a man from whom you can henceforth fear no danger; his crown is prophaned and cast to the ground, and now all mankind will make a jest of him.

The word however is very affecting, *behold the man*. It is good for every one of us, with an eye of faith, to behold the man Christ Jesus in his sufferings. *Behold this king with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him; the crown of thorns*, *Cant. iii. 11*. Behold him, and be suitably affected with the sight. Behold him, and mourn because of him; behold him and love him; be still looking unto Jesus.

Thirdly, The prosecutors instead of being pacified, were but the more exasperated *ver. 6, 7*.

1. Observe here their clamour and outrage. The chief priests who headed the mob, cried out with fury and indignation, and their officers, or servants, who must say as they said, joined with them in crying, *crucify him, crucify him*. The common people perhaps would have acquiesced in Pilate's declaration of his innocency, but their leaders, the priests, caused them to err. Now by this it appears that their malice against Christ was, 1. *Unreasonable and most absurd*, in that they offer not to make good their charge against him, or to object against the judgment of Pilate concerning him; but though he be innocent he must be crucified. 2. It was insupportable and very cruel. Neither the extremity of his scourging, nor his patience under it, nor the tender expostulations of the judge, could mollify them in the least; no, nor could the jest into which Pilate had turned the cause, put them into a pleasant humour. 3. It was violent and exceeding resolute; they will have it their own way and hazard the governor's favour, the peace of the city, and their own safety, rather than abate of the utmost of their demands. Were they so violent in running down our Lord Jesus, and in crying, *crucify him, crucify him*; and shall not we be vigorous and zealous in advancing his name, and in crying, *crown him, crown him*? Did their hatred of him sharpen their endeavours against him; and shall not our love to him quicken our endeavours for him and his kingdom?

2. The check Pilate gave to their fury, still insisting upon the prisoner's innocency. *Take ye him, and crucify him*, if he must be crucified; this is spoken ironically, he knew they could not, they durst not crucify him; but it is as if he should say, you shall not make me a judge to your malice; I cannot with a safe conscience crucify him. A good resolve, if he could but have stuck to it. He found no fault in him, and therefore should not have continued to parley with the prosecutors: They that would be safe from sin should be deaf to temptation. Nay, he should have secured the prisoner from their insults: What was he armed with power for, but to protect the injured? The guards of governors ought to be the guards of justice. But Pilate had not courage enough to stick to his conscience; and his cowardice betrayed him into a snare.

3. The further colour which the prosecutors gave to their demands, *ver. 7*. *We have a law, and by our law*, if it were but in our power to execute it, he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. Now here observe,

1. They make their boast of their law, even then, when through breaking the law they dishonoured God, as is charged upon the Jews, *Lev. ii. 23*. They had indeed an excellent law, far exceeding the statutes and judgments of other nations; but in vain did they boast of their law, when they abused it to such ill purposes.

They discover a restless and inveterate malice against our Lord Jesus. When they could not incense Pilate against him by alledging that he pretended himself a King, they urged this, that he pretended himself a God. Thus they turn every stone to take him off.

3. They pervert the law, and make that the instrument of their malice. Some think they refer to a law made particularly against Christ, as if being a law it must be executed right or wrong; whereas there is a woe to them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write the grievousness which they have prescribed, *Isa. x. 1*. See *Micah vi. 16*. But should rather seem they refer to the law of Moses; and if so, 1. It was true that blasphemers, idolaters, and false prophets, were to be put to death by that law. Whoever falsely pretended to be the Son of God was guilty of blasphemy, *Lev. xxiv. 16*. But then, 2. It was false that he pretended to be the Son of God, for he really was so; and they ought to have enquired into the proofs he produced of his being so. If he said he was the Son of God, and the scope and tendency of his doctrine was not to draw people from God, but to bring them to him, and he confirm his mission and doctrine by miracles, as undoubtedly he did beyond contradiction, by their law they ought to hearken to him, *Deut. xviii. 18, 19*, and if they did not, they were to be cut off. That which was his honour, and might have been their happiness, if they had not stood in their own light, they impute to him as a crime, for which he ought to die; yet if he ought to die by their law, he ought not to be crucified, for that was no death inflicted by their law.

Fourthly, The judge brings the prisoner again to his trial upon this new suggestion. Observe,

1. The concern Pilate was in when he heard this alledged, *ver. 8*. When he heard that his prisoner pretended not to royalty only, but to deity, he was the more afraid: This embarrassed him more than ever, and made the case more difficult both ways; for, 1. There was the more danger of offending the people if he should acquit him, for he knew how jealous that people were for the unity of the Godhead, and what aversion they now had to other gods; and therefore, though he might pacify their rage against a pretended king, he could never reconcile them to a pretended God: If this be at the bottom of the tumult, thinks Pilate, it will not be turned off with a jest. 2. There was the more danger of offending his own conscience if he should condemn him. Is he one (thinks Pilate) that makes himself the Son of God, and what if it should prove that he is so? What will become of me then? Even natural conscience makes men afraid of being found fighting against God. The heathen had some fabulous tradition of incarnate deities appearing sometimes in mean circumstances, and treated ill by some that paid dear for their so doing. Pilate fears, lest he should thus run himself into a premature.

2. His further examination of our Lord Jesus thereupon, *ver. 9*. That he might give the prosecutors all the fair play they could desire, he resumed the debate, went into the judgment hall, and asked Christ, *whence art thou?* Observe,

1. The place he chose for his examination, he went into the judgment-hall for privacy, that he might be out of the noise and clamour of the crowd, and might examine the thing more closely. They that would find out the truth as it is in Jesus, must get out of the noise of prejudice, and retire as it were into the judgment-hall to converse with Christ alone.

2. The question he puts to him, *whence art thou?* Art thou from men or from heaven? From below or from above? He had before asked directly, *art thou a king?* But doth here directly ask, *art thou the Son of God?* lest he should seem to meddle with divine things too boldly. But in general, *whence art thou?* Where wast thou? and in what world hadst thou a being before thy coming into this world?

3. The silence of our Lord Jesus when he was examined upon this head, but

but *Jesus gave him no answer*. This was not a full silence in contempt of the court, nor was it because he knew not what to say. But,

2. It was a patient silence, that the scripture might be fulfilled, *as a sheep before the shearer is dumb, so opened he not his mouth*, Isa. lvi. 7. This silence loudly spoke his submission to his Father's will in his present sufferings, which he thus accommodated himself to, and composed himself to bear. He was silent because he would say nothing to hinder his sufferings. If Christ had avowed himself a God, as plainly as he avowed himself a King, it is likely he would not have condemned him, for he was afraid, at the mention of it by the prosecutors; and the Romans, though they triumphed over the kings of the nations they conquered, yet stood in awe of their gods. See 1 Cor. ii. 8. *If they had known him to be the Lord of glory, they would not have crucified him*, and how then must we have been saved?

2. It was a prudent silence. When the chief priests asked him, *art thou the Son of the Blessed?* He answered, *I am*, for he knew they went upon the scriptures of the Old Testament which spake of the Messiah; but when Pilate asked him, he knew he did not understand his own question, having no notion of the Messiah, and of his being the *Son of God*, and therefore to what purpose should he reply to him whose head was filled with the pagan theology, to which he would have turned his answer?

4. The haughty check which Pilate gave him for his silence, ver. 10. *Speakest thou not unto me?* Dost thou put such an affront upon me as to stand mute? What! knowest thou not, that as president of the province, I have power, if I think fit, to crucify thee; and have power, if I think fit, to release thee. Observe here,

1. How Pilate magnifies himself, and boasts of his own authority, as not inferior to that of Nebuchadnezzar, of whom it is said, that *whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive*, Dan. v. 19. Men in power are apt to be puffed up with their power, and the more absolute and arbitrary it is, the more it gratifies their pride, and humours that. But he magnifies his power to an exorbitant degree, when he boasts that he had power to crucify one whom he had declared innocent, for no prince or potentate has authority to do wrong. *Id possumus, quod jure possumus*.

2. How he tramples upon our blessed Saviour, *Speakest thou not unto me?* He reflects upon him, 1. As if he were undutiful and disrespectful to those in authority, not speaking when he was spoken to. 2. As if he were ungrateful to one that had been tender of him; speakest thou not to me who have laboured thy release? 3. As if he were unwise for himself; wilt thou not speak to clear thyself to one that is willing to clear thee? If Christ had indeed sought to save his life, now had been his time to have spoken; but that which he had to do was to lay down his life.

5. Christ's pertinent answer to this check, ver. 11. where,

1. He boldly rebukes his arrogance, and rectifies his mistake. As big as thou lookest and talkest, thou couldst have no power at all against me; no, power to scourge, no power to crucify, *except it were given thee from above*. Though Christ did not think fit to answer him when he was impertinent, then answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like him; yet did he think fit to answer him when he was impertinent, then answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit, Prov. xxvi. 4, 5. When Pilate used his power, Christ silently submitted to it; but when he grew proud of it, he made him know himself. All the power thou hast is given thee from above; which may be taken two ways.

1. As minding him that his power in general as a magistrate, was a limited power, and he could do no more than God would suffer him to do. God is the fountain of power; and the powers that he, as they are ordained by him, and derived from him, so they are subject to him: They ought to go no further than his law directs them, they can go no further than his providence permits them. They are *God's hand and his sword*, Psalm xvii. 13. Though the axe may boast itself against him that useth therewith, yet still it is but a tool, Isa. x. 5—15. Let the proud oppressors know, that there is a higher than they, to whom they are accountable, Eccl. v. 8. And let this silence the murmurings of the oppressed, *It is the Lord*. God has bid Shimei curse David; and let it comfort them, that their persecutors can do no more than God will let them. See Isa. li. 12, 13.

2. As informing him that his power against him in particular, and all the efforts of that power, were by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, Acts ii. 23. Pilate never fancied himself to look so great as now, when he sat in judgment upon such a prisoner as this, who was looked upon by many as the *Son of God* and King of Israel, and had the fate of so great a man at his dispose; but Christ lets him know that he was herein but an instrument in God's hand, and could do nothing against him, but by the appointment of heaven, Acts iv. 27, 28.

2. He mildly excuseth and extenuates his sin, in comparison with the sin of the ringleaders. Therefore he that delivered me unto thee, lies under greater guilt; for thou as a magistrate hast power from above, and art in thy place, thy sin is less than theirs, who from envy and malice, urge thee to abuse thy power.

1. It is plainly intimated, that what Pilate did was sin, a great sin, and the force which the Jews put upon him, and which he put upon himself in it, would not justify him. Christ hereby intended a hint for the awakening of his conscience, and the increase of that fear he was now under. Others, guilt will not acquit us, nor will it avail in the great day to say, others were worse than we, for we are not to be judged by comparison, but must bear our own burden.

2. Yet theirs that delivered him to Pilate was the greater sin; by this it appears that all sins are not equal, but some more heinous than others; some comparatively as goats, others as camels; some as moles in the eyes, others as beams; some as pence, others as pounds. *He that delivered Christ to Pilate was either*.

1. The people of the Jews, who cried out, *crucify him, crucify him*: they had seen Christ's miracles, which Pilate had not; to them the Messiah was first sent, they were his own, and to them who were now enslaved, a Redeemer should have been most welcome, and therefore it was much worse in them to appear against him than in Pilate.

2. Or rather he hears Caiaphas in particular, who was at the head of the conspiracy against Christ, and first advised his death, chap. xi. 49. The sin of Caiaphas was abundantly greater than the sin of Pilate. Caiaphas prosecuted Christ from pure enmity to him and his doctrine, deliberately and of malice prepense: Pilate condemned him purely for fear of the people, and it was a hasty resolution which he had not time to cool upon.

3. Some think Christ means Judas, for though he did not immediately deliver him into the hands of Pilate, yet he betrayed him to those that did. The sin of Judas was, upon many accounts, greater than the sin of Pilate. Pilate was a stranger to Christ, Judas was his friend and follower. Pilate found no fault in him, but Judas knew a deal of good by him. Pilate though biassed was not bribed, but Judas took a reward against the innocent; the sin of Judas was a leading sin, and let in all that followed. He was a guide to them that took Jesus. So great was the sin of Judas, that vengeance suffered him not to live; but when Christ said this, or soon after, he was gone to his own place.

Fifthly, Pilate struggles with the Jews to deliver Jesus out of their hands, Vol. III. No. CXCHII.

but in vain. We hear no more after this of any thing that passed between Pilate and the prisoner, what remains lay between him and the prosecutors.

1. Pilate seems more zealous than before to get Jesus discharged, ver. 12. *from thenceforth*, from this time, and for this reason, because Christ had given him that answer, ver. 11. which though it had a rebuke in it, yet he took it kindly; and though Christ found fault with him, he still continued to find no fault in Christ, but sought to release him, desired it, endeavoured it; he sought to release him; he contrived how to do it handsomely and safely, and so as not to disoblige the priests. It never doth well, when our resolutions to do our duty are swallowed up in projects how to do it plausibly and conveniently. If Pilate's policy had not prevailed above his justice, he would not have been long seeking to release him, but would have done it; *fiat justitia, ruat cælum*.

2. The Jews were more furious than ever, and more violently to get Jesus crucified. Still they carry on their design with noise and clamour as before; so now they cried out. They would have it thought that the commonalty was against him, and therefore laboured to get him cried down by a multitude, and it is no hard matter to pack a mob; whereas if a fair poll had been granted, I doubt not but it would have been carried by a great majority for the releasing of him. A few mad men may out-shout many wise men, and then fancy themselves to speak the sense (when it is but the non-sense) of a nation, or of all mankind; but it is not so easy a thing to change the sense of the people, as it is to misrepresent it, and to change their cry. Now Christ was in the hands of his enemies, his friends were shy and silent, and disappeared, and those that were against him were forward to shew themselves so, and this gave the chief priests an opportunity to represent it as the concurring vote of all the Jews, that he should be crucified. In this outcry they endeavoured two things,

1. To blacken the prisoner as an enemy to Cæsar. He had refused the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them, had declared his kingdom not to be of this world, and yet they will have it that he speaks against Cæsar, *αὐτοκράτην*, he opposeth Cæsar, invades his dignity and sovereignty. It has always been the artifice of the enemies of religion to represent it as hurtful to kings and provinces, when it would be highly beneficial to both.

2. To frighten the judge, as no friend to Cæsar; if he let this man go unpunished, and let him go on, *Thou art not Cæsar's friend*, and therefore false to thy trust and the duty of thy place, and obnoxious to the emperor's displeasure, and liable to be turned out. They intimate a threatening, that they would inform against him, and get him displaced; and here they touched him in a sensible and very tender part. But of all people those Jews should not have pretended a concern for Cæsar, who were themselves so ill affected to him and his government. They should not talk of being friends to Cæsar, who were themselves such back friends to him; yet thus a pretended zeal for that which is good, often serves to cover a real malice against that which is better.

3. When other expedients had been tried in vain, Pilate slightly endeavoured to hantle them out of their fury, and yet in doing that, betrayed himself to them, and yielded to the rapid stream, ver. 13, 14, 15. After he had stood it out a great while, and seemed now as if he would have made a vigorous resistance upon that attack, ver. 12. he basely surrendered. Observe here,

1. What it was that shocked Pilate, ver. 13. *When he heard that saying*, that he could not be true to Cæsar's honour, nor sure of Cæsar's favour, if he did not put Jesus to death, then he thought it was time to look about him. All they had said to prove Christ a malefactor, and that therefore it was Pilate's duty to condemn him, did not move him, but still he kept to his conviction of Christ's innocence; but when they urged that it was his interest to condemn him, then he began to yield. Note, They that bind up their happiness in the favour of men, make themselves an easy prey to the temptations of Satan.

2. What preparation was made for a definitive sentence upon this matter. Pilate brought Jesus forth, and he himself in great state took the chair; we may suppose that he called for his robes, that he might look big, and then he sat down in the judgment seat. He was condemned with all the ceremony that could be, 1. To bring us off at God's bar, and that all believers through Christ being judged here might be acquitted in the court of heaven. 2. To take off the terror of pompous trials, which his followers would be brought to for his sake. Paul might the better stand at Cæsar's judgment-seat, when his matter had stood there before him.

Notice is here taken of the place and time.

1. The place where Christ was condemned? in a place called the Pavement, but in Hebrew, *Gabbatha*, probably the place where he used to sit to try causes or criminals. Some make *Gabbatha* to signify an inclosed place, fenced against the insult of the people, whom therefore he did the less need to fear; others an elevated place, raised that all might see him.

2. The time, ver. 14. It was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour. Observe,

1. The day: it was the preparation of the passover, i. e. for the passover sabbath, and the solemnities of that, and the rest of the days of the feast of unleavened bread. This is plain from Luke xxiii. 54. *It was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on*. So that this preparation was for the sabbath. Note, Before the passover there ought to be preparation. This is mentioned as an aggravation of their sin in persecuting Christ with so much malice and fury; that it was when they should have been purging out the old leaven, to get ready for the passover, but the better the day the worse the deed.

2. The hour; it was about the sixth hour. Some ancient Greek and Latin manuscripts read it about the third hour, which agrees with Mark xv. 35. And it appears by Matt. xxvii. 45. that he was upon the cross before the sixth hour. But it should seem to come in here not as a precise determination of the time, but as an additional aggravation of the sin of his prosecutors, that they were pushing on the prosecution not only on a solemn day, the day of the preparation, but from the third to the sixth hour, which was as we call it, church-time, on that day they were employed in this wickedness, so that for this day, though they were priests, they dropt the temple service, for they did not leave Christ till the sixth hour, when the darkness began, which frightened them away. Some think that the sixth hour, with this evangelist, is according to the Roman reckoning and ours, six of the clock in the morning, answering to the Jews sixth hour of the day; this is very probable, that Christ's trial before Pilate was at the height about six in the morning, which was then a little after sun-rising.

3. The reconter Pilate had with the Jews, both priests and people, before he proceeded to give judgment, endeavouring in vain to stem the tide of their rage.

1. He saith unto the Jews, *behold your king*. This is a reproof to them for the absurdity and malice of their innuendo, that this Jesus made himself a king; *behold your king*, i. e. him whom you accuse as a pretender to the crown, Is this a man likely to be dangerous to the government? I am satisfied he is not, and you may be so too, and let him alone. Some think he hereby upbraids them with their secret disaffection to Cæsar; you would have this man to be your king, if he would but have headed a rebellion against Cæsar. But Pilate, though he was far from meaning so, seems as if

he were the voice of God to them. Christ now crowned with thorns here, is, as a king at his coronation, offered to the people, *behold your king*, the king which God hath set upon his holy hill of Zion; but they, instead of entering into it with acclamations of joyful consent, protest against him, they will not have a king of God's choosing.

2. They *cried out* with the greatest indignation, *away with him, away with him*, which speaks disdain as well as malice, *āpor, āpor, take him*, he is none of ours; we disown him for our kinsman, much more for our king; we have no only no veneration for him, but no compassion; *away with him* out of our sight; for so it was written of him, he is one *whom the nation abhors*. Isa. xlix. 7. and they *hid as it were their faces from him*, Isa. liii. 2, 3. *Away with him from the earth*, Acts xxii. 22. This shews, 1. How we deserved to have been treated at God's tribunal, we were by sin become *odious to God's holiness*, which cried, *away with them, away with them*, for God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; we are also become obnoxious to God's justice, which cried against us, *crucify them, crucify them*, let the sentence of the law be executed. Had not Christ interposed, and been thus *rejected of men*, we had been for ever *rejected of God*. 2. It shows how we ought to treat our sins; we are often in scripture said to crucify sin, in conformity to Christ's death; now they that crucified Christ, did it with detestation. With a pious indignation we should *run down sin in us*, as they with an impious indignation run him down who was *made sin for us*. The true penitent *casts away* from him his transgressions, *away with them, away with them*, Isa. ii. 20—xxx. 22. *crucify them, crucify them*; it is not fit they should live in my soul, Hof. xiv. 8.

3. Pilate, willing to have Jesus released and yet that it should be their doings, asks them, *Shall I crucify your king?* In saying this, he designed either, 1. To *stop their mouths*, by shewing them how absurd it was for them to reject one who offered himself to them to be their king, at a time when they need one more than ever. Have they no sense of slavery? No desire of liberty? No value for a delivery? Though he saw no cause to fear him, they might see cause to hope for something from him; since crushed and sinking interest are ready to catch at any thing. Or, 2. To *stop the mouth of his own conscience*; if this Jesus be a king (thinks Pilate) he is only *king of the Jews*, and therefore I have nothing to do but to make a fair tender of him to them; if they refuse him, and will have their king crucified, what is that to me? He banters them for their folly in expecting a Messiah, and yet running down one that bids so fair to be he.

4. The chief priests, that they might effectually renounce Christ, and engage Pilate to crucify him, but others, sore against their will, *cried out, we have no king but Cæsar*. This they knew would please Pilate, and so they hoped to carry their point, though at the same time they hated Cæsar and his government. But observe here, 1. What a plain indication this is, that the time for the Messiah to appear, even the set time was now come; for if the *Jews have no king but Cæsar*, then is the *sceptre departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet*, which should never be till Shiloh come to set up a spiritual kingdom. And, 2. What a righteous thing it was with God to bring upon them that ruin by the Romans, which followed not long after. 1. They adhere to Cæsar, and to Cæsar they shall go. God soon gave them enough of their Cæsars, and, according to Jotham's parable, since the trees choose the *bramble* for their king, rather than the *vine* and the *olive*, an evil spirit is sent among them, for they could not do it truly and sincerely, Judges ix. 12—19. from henceforward they were rebels to the Cæsars, and the Cæsars tyrants to them, and it ended in the overthrow of their place and nation. It is just with God to make that a scourge and a plague to us, which we prefer before Christ. 2. They would have *no other king but Cæsar*, and never have they had any other to this day, but have now *abode many days without a king and without a prince*, Hof. iii. 4. without any of their own, but the kings of the nations have ruled over them; since they will have no king but Cæsar, so shall their doom be, themselves have decided it.

16. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away. 17. And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called *the place of a skull*, which is called in the Hebrew *Golgotha*? 18. Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

We have here sentence of death passed upon our Lord Jesus, and execution done presently. A mighty struggle Pilate had had within him between his convictions and his corruptions, but at length his convictions yielded, and his corruptions prevailed; the fear of man having a greater power over him than the fear of God.

First, *Pilate gave judgment against Christ*, and signed the warrant for his execution, ver. 16. We may see here,

1. How Pilate sinned against his conscience; he had again and again pronounced him innocent, and yet at last condemned him as guilty. Pilate, since he came to be governor, had in many instances disobliged and exasperated the Jewish nation, for he was a man of a haughty implacable spirit, and extremely wedded to his humour. He had seized upon the Corban, and spent it upon a water-work; he had brought in shields stamped with Cæsar's image, which was very provoking to the Jews; he had sacrificed the lives of many to his resolutions herein; fearing therefore he should be complained of for those and other insolencies, he was willing to gratify the Jews. Now this makes the matter much worse. If he had been of an easy, soft and pliable disposition, his yielding to so strong a stream had been the more excusable; but for a man that was so wilful in other things, and of so fierce a resolution, to be overcome in a thing of this nature, shews him an ill man indeed, that could better bear the wronging of his conscience, than the crossing of his humour.

2. How he endeavoured to transfer the guilt upon the Jews. He *delivered him* not to his own officers (as usual) but to the prosecutors, the chief priests and elders: so excusing the wrong to his own conscience with this, that it was but a permissive condemnation, and that he did not put Christ to death, but only connive at those that did it.

3. How Christ was made *sin for us*. We deserved to have been condemned, but Christ was condemned for us, that to us there might be *no condemnation*. God was now entering into judgment with his Son, that he might not enter into judgment with his servants.

Secondly, Judgment was no sooner given, but with all possible expedition the prosecutors, having gained their point, resolved to lose no time, 1. Left Pilate should change his mind and order a reprieve. Those are enemies to our souls, and the worst of enemies, that hurry us to sin, and then leave us no room to undo what we have done amiss. 2. Left there should be an *uproar among the people*; and there should have been a greater number against, than they had with so much artifice got to be for them.

It were well if we would be thus expeditious in that which is good, and not stay for more difficulties.

1. They immediately hurried away the prisoner. The *chief priests* greedily flew upon the prey which they had been long waiting for; now it is drawn into their net. Or they, i. e. the soldiers who were to attend the execution, they took him and led him away, not to the place from whence he came, and thence to the place of execution, as is usual with us, but directly to the place of execution. Both the priests and the soldiers joined in *leading him away*. Now was the *Son of man delivered into the hands of men*, wicked and unreasonable men. By the law of Moses (and in appeals by our law) the prosecutors were to be the executioners, Deut. xvii. 7. And the priests here were proud of the office. His being *led away* doth not suppose him to have made any opposition, but *the scripture must be fulfilled*, he was *led as a sheep to the slaughter*, Acts viii. 32. we deserved to have been *led forth with the workers of iniquity* as criminals to execution, Psal. cxxv. 5. But he was *led forth* for us that we might escape.

2. To add to this misery, they obliged him, as long as he was able, to carry his cross, ver. 17. according to the custom among the Romans; hence *Purcifer* was among them a name of reproach. Their crosses did not stand up constantly, as our gibbets do in the places of execution; because the malefactors was nailed to the cross as it lay along upon the ground, and then it was lifted up and fastened in the earth, and removed when the execution was over, and commonly buried with the body; so that every one that was crucified had a *cross of his own*. Now Christ's carrying his cross may be considered, 1. As a part of his sufferings; he endured the cross literally. It was a long and thick piece of timber, that was necessary for such a use, and some think it was neither seasoned nor hewn. The blessed body of the Lord Jesus was tender, and unaccustomed to such burdens; it had now lately been harassed and tired out. His shoulders sore with the stripes they had given him; every jog of the cross would renew his smart, and be apt to strike the thorns he was crowned with into his head; yet all this he patiently underwent, and it was but the *beginning of sorrow*. 2. As answering the type which went before him; Isaac, when he was to be offered, carried the wood on which he was to be bound, and with which he was to be burned. 3. As very significant of his understanding, the Father having *laid upon him the iniquity of us all*, Isa. liii. 6. and he being to *take away sin*, by *bearing it in his own body upon the tree*, 1 Pet. ii. 24. He had said, in effect, *on me be the curse*; for he was made a curse for us, and therefore on him was the cross. 4. As very instructive to us. Our Master hereby taught all his disciples to take up their cross and follow him. Whatever cross he calls us out to bear at any time, we must remember he bore the cross first, and by bearing it for us, bears it off from us in a great measure, for thus he hath made *his yoke easy, and his burden light*. He bore that end of the cross that had the curse upon it, that was the heavy end, and thence all that are his, are enabled to call their afflictions for him light, and but for a moment.

3. They brought him to the place of execution; he *went forth*, not dragged against his will, but voluntarily in his sufferings. He *went forth* out of the city, for he was *crucified without the gate*, Heb. xiii. 12. And to put the greatest infamy upon his sufferings, he was brought to the common place of execution, as one in all points *numbered among the transgressors*; a place called *Golgotha*, the *place of a skull*, where they threw dead men's skulls and bones, or where the heads of beheaded malefactors were left; a place *ceremonially unclean*; there Christ suffered, because he was *made sin for us*; that he might *purge our consciences from dead works*, and the pollutions of them. If one would take notice of the traditions of the elders, there are two which are mentioned by many of the ancient writers concerning this place. 1. That Adam was buried here, and that this was the place of *his skull*, and they observe that there where death triumphed over the first Adam, there the second Adam triumphed over him. Gerhard quotes for this tradition, Origen, Cyprian, Epiphanius, Austin, Jerom, and others. 2. That this was that mountain in the land of Moriah, on which Abraham offered up Isaac, and the ram was a ransom for Isaac.

4. There they crucified him, and the other malefactors with him; ver. 18. *There they crucified him*. Observe, 1. What death Christ died; the death of the cross, a bloody, painful, shameful death, a cursed death. He was *nailed to the cross*, as a sacrifice *bound to the altar*, as a Saviour fixed for his undertaking; his ear nailed to God's door-post to serve him for ever. He was lifted up, as the brazen serpent, hung between heaven and earth, because we were unworthy of either, and abandoned by both. His hands stretched out to invite and embrace us; he hung upon the tree some hours dying gradually in the full use of reason and speech, that he might actually resign himself a sacrifice. 2. In what company he died; *two others with him*. Probably those had not been executed at that time, but at the request of the chief priests to add to the disgrace of our Lord Jesus; which might be the reason why one of them reviled him, because their death was hastened for his sake. Had they taken two of his disciples, and crucified them with him, it had been an honour to him; but if such as they had been *partakers with him in suffering*, it would have looked as if they had been *undertakers with him in satisfaction*: Therefore it was ordered that his fellow-sufferers should be the worst of sinners, that he might *bear our reproach*, and that the merit might appear to be his only. This exposed him much to the people's contempt and hatred, who are apt to judge of persons by the lump, and are not curious in distinguishing, and would conclude him was only a malefactor because he was yoked with malefactors, but the worst of the three, because put in the midst. But thus the scripture was fulfilled, *he was numbered among the transgressors*. He did not die at the altar among the sacrifices, nor mingle his blood with that of bulls and goats; but he died among the criminals, and mingled his blood with theirs who were sacrificed to public justice.

And now let us pause awhile, and with an eye of faith look upon Jesus: Was ever sorrow like unto his sorrow? See him who was clothed with glory stripped of it all, and clothed with shame: him who was the *praise of angels*, made a *reproach of men*; who had been with eternal delight and joy in the bosom of his Father, now in the extremities of pain and agony. See him bleeding, see him struggling, see him dying, see him and love him, love him and live him, and study what we shall render.

19. ¶ And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. 20. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew and Greek, and Latin. 21. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. 22. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written. 23. ¶ Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments; and made four parts,

parts, to every soldier a part; and also *his* coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. 24. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, Which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did. 25. ¶ Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. 26. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy Son! 27. Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. 28. ¶ After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. 29. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. 30. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Here are some remarkable circumstances of Christ's dying, more fully related than before, which they will take special notice of who covet to know Christ and him crucified.

First, The title set up over his head. Observe,

1. The inscription itself which Pilate wrote, and ordered to be fixed to the top of the cross; declaring the cause for which he was crucified, *ver.* 19. Matthew called it *arria*, the accusation; Mark and Luke called it *myrrap*, the inscription; John calls it by the proper Latin name, *titulus*, the title: And it was this, *Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews*. Pilate intended this for his reproach, that he being *Jesus of Nazareth* should pretend to be king of the Jews, and set up in competition with Cæsar, to whom Pilate would thus recommend himself, as very jealous for his honour and interest, when he would treat but a titular king, a king in metaphor, as the worst of malefactors; but God over-ruled this matter, 1. That it might be a further testimony to the innocency of our Lord Jesus; for here was an accusation, which, as it was worded, contained no crime. If this be that, if this be all they have to lay to his charge, surely he has done nothing worthy of death or of bonds. 2. That it might shew forth his dignity and honour. This is Jesus a Saviour, *N. S.*, the *h-l-fied Nazareth*, sanctified to God; this is the *King of the Jews*, *Messiah the prince, the sceptre that should rise out of Israel*, as Balaam had foretold; dying for the good of his people, as Caiaphas had foretold: Thus all these three ill men witnessed to Christ, though they meant not so.

2. The notice taken of this inscription, *ver.* 20. Many of the Jews read it, not only those of Jerusalem, but those out of the country, and from other countries, strangers and proselytes that came up to worship at the feast: multitudes read it, and it occasioned a great variety of reflections and speculations, as men stood affected. Christ himself was set for a sign, a title.

Here are two reasons why the title was so much read.

1. Because the place where Jesus was crucified, though without the gate, yet was *nigh the city*; which intimates, that if it had been at any great distance off they would not have been led, no, not by their curiosity, to go see it, and read it. It is an advantage to have the means of knowing Christ brought to our doors.

2. Because it was written in *Hebrew*, and *Greek*, and *Latin*, which made it legible by all, they all understand one or other of these languages, and none more careful to bring up their children to read than the Jews generally were. It likewise made it the more considerable; every one would be curious to enquire what it was, which was so industriously published in the three most known languages. In the *Hebrew*, the oracles of God were recorded; in *Greek*, the learning of the philosophers; and in *Latin*, the laws of the empire: In each of these Christ is proclaimed king, in whom are hid all the treasures of *revelation, wisdom, and power*. God so ordering it that this should be written in the three most known tongues, it was intimated thereby, that Jesus Christ should be a *Saviour to all nations*, and not to the Jews only; and also that every nation should hear in their own tongue the wonderful works of the Redeemer. *Hebrew*, *Greek*, and *Latin*, were the vulgar languages at that time in this part of the world; so that this is so far from intimating (as the Papists would have it) that the scripture is still to be retained in these three languages, that on the contrary it teaches us that the knowledge of Christ ought to be diffused throughout every nation in their own tongue, as the proper vehicle of it, that people may converse as freely with the scriptures as they do with their neighbours.

3. The offence which the prosecutors took at it, *ver.* 21. They would not have it written, *the king of the Jews*; but that he said of himself, *I am the king of the Jews*. Here they shew themselves, 1. Very spiteful and malicious against Christ. It was not enough to have him crucified, but they must have this name crucified too, to justify themselves in giving him such ill treatment, they thought themselves concerned to give him an ill character, and to represent him as an usurper of honours and powers that he was not entitled to. 2. Foolishly jealous of the honour of their nation; though they were a conquered and enslaved people, yet they stood so much upon the punctilio of their reputation, that they scorned to have it said, that this was their king. 3. They shew themselves very impertinent and troublesome to Pilate; they could not but be sensible that they had forced him against his mind to condemn Christ, and yet, in such a trivial thing as this, they continue to tease him! And it was so much the worse, in that, though they had charged him with pretending to be the king of the Jews, yet they had not proved it, nor had he ever said so.

4. The Judge's resolution to adhere to it: *What I have written, I have written*, and will not alter it to humour them.

(1.) Hereby an affront was put upon the chief priests, who would still be dictating. It seems, by Pilate's manner of speaking, that he was uneasy in himself for yielding to them, and vexed at them for forcing him to it; and therefore he was resolved to be cross with them; and by this inscription insinuates, 1. That, notwithstanding their pretences, they were not sincere in their affections to Cæsar and his government; they were willing enough to have a king of the Jews, if they could have one to their mind. 2. That such a king as this, so mean and despicable, was good enough to be the king of the Jews; and this would be the fate of all that should dare to oppose the Roman power. 3. That they had been very unjust and unreasonable in prosecuting this Jesus, when there was no fault to be found in him.

(2.) Hereby honour was done to the Lord Jesus. Pilate stuck to it with resolution, that he was the king of the Jews; what he had written, was what God had first written, and therefore he could not alter; for thus it was written, that *Messias the prince should be cut off*, Dan. ix. 26. This therefore is the true cause of his death; he dies, because the king of Israel must die, must thus die. When the Jews reject Christ, and will not have him for their king, Pilate, a Gentile, sticks to it that he is a king; which was an earnest of what came to pass soon after, when the Gentiles submitted to the kingdom of the Messiah, which the unbelieving Jews had rebelled against.

Secondly, The dividing of his garments among the executioners, *ver.* 23. 24. Four soldiers were employed, who, when they had crucified Jesus, had nailed him to the cross, and lifted him up, and him upon it, and nothing more was to be done but to wait his expiring through the extremity of pain, as with us, when the prisoner is turned off, then they went to make a dividend of his clothes, each claiming an equal share, and so they made four parts, as near of the same value as they could, to every soldier a part; but his coat, or upon his garment, whether cloke or gown, being a pretty piece of curiosity, without seam, woven from the top throughout, they agreed to cast lots for that. Here observe,

1. The shame they put upon our Lord Jesus, in stripping him of his garments before they crucified him. The shame of nakedness came in with sin. He therefore who was made sin for us, bare that shame, to roll away our reproach. He was stripped, that we might be clothed with white raiment, Rev. iii. 18. and that when we are unclothed, we may not be found naked.

2. The wages with which these soldiers paid themselves for crucifying Christ: They are willing to do it for his own clothes. Nothing is to be done so ill, but there will be found men ill enough to do it for a trifle. Probably, they hoped to make more than ordinary advantage of his clothes, having heard of cures wrought by the touch of the hem of his garment; or, expecting that his admirers would give any money for them.

3. The sport they made about his seamless coat; we read not of any thing about him valuable or remarkable but that, and that not for the richness, but only the variety of it, for it was woven from the top throughout; no curiosity therefore in the shape, but an affected plainness. Tradition saith, his mother wove it him, and adds this further, that it was made for him when he was a child, and like the Israelites clothes in the wilderness, waxed not old; but this is a groundless fancy. The soldiers thought it pity to rend it, for then it would unravel, and a piece of it would be good for nothing; they would therefore cast lots for it. While Christ was in his dying agonies, they were merrily dividing his spoils.

The preserving of Christ's seamless coat is commonly alluded to, to shew the care all Christians ought to take that they rend not the church of Christ with strifes and divisions; yet some have observed, that the reason why the soldiers would not rend Christ's coat, was not out of any respect to Christ but because each of them hoped to have it entire for themselves: And so many cry out against schism, only that they may ingross all the wealth and power to themselves. Those who opposed Luther's separation from the church of Rome, urged much the *tunica inconsutilis*, the seamless coat; and some of them laid so much stress upon it, that they were called the *Incon-sutiles*.

4. The fulfilling of the scripture in this. David, in spirit, foretold this very circumstance of Christ's sufferings, in that psalm, Psalm xxii. The event so exactly answering the prediction, proves, 1. That the scripture is the word of God, which foretold contingent events concerning Christ so long before, and they came to pass according to the prediction. 2. That Jesus is the true Messiah: for in him all the Old Testament prophets concerning the Messiah had, and have their full accomplishments. These things therefore the soldiers did.

Thirdly, The care that he took of his poor mother.

(1.) His mother attends him to his death, *ver.* 23. There stood by the cross, as near as they could get, his mother, and some of his relations and friends with her. At first they stood near, as it is said here; but, it is probable, afterwards the soldiers forced them to stand afar off, as it is said in Matthew and Mark: or they themselves removed out of the ground.

1. See here the tender affection of these pious women to our Lord Jesus in his sufferings: When all his disciples, except John, had forsaken him, they continued their attendance on him. Thus the feeble were as David, Zech. xii. 8. they were not deterred by the fury of the enemy, or the horror of the sight; they could not refuse him or relieve him, yet they attended him to shew their good will. It is an impious and blasphemous construction which some of the popish writers put upon the virgin Mary standing by the cross, that thereby she contributed to the satisfaction he made for sin, no less than he did, and so became a joint-mediatrix and co-adjutrix in our salvation.

2. We must easily suppose what an affliction it was to these poor women to see him thus abused, especially to the blessed Virgin. Now was fulfilled Simeon's word, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul, Luke ii. 35. His torments were her tortures; she was upon the rack while he was upon the cross; and her heart bled with his wounds; and the reproaches wherewith they reproached him, fell on them that attended him.

3. We may justly admire the power of divine grace in supporting these women, especially the virgin Mary, under this heavy trial. We do not find his mother wringing her hands, or tearing her hair, or rending her clothes, or making an outcry; but, with a wonderful composure, standing by the cross, and her friends with her. Surely she and they were strengthened by a divine power to this degree of patience; and surely the virgin Mary had a fuller expectation of his resurrection than the rest had, which supported her thus. We know not what we can bear till we are tried, and then we know who has said, *My grace is sufficient for thee*.

(2.) He tenderly provides for his mother at his death. It is probable, Joseph, her husband, was long since dead, and that her son Jesus had supported her, and her relation to him had been her maintenance; and now he was dying, what would become of her? He saw her standing by, and knew her cares and griefs; and he saw John standing not far off, and so he settled a new relation between his beloved mother and his beloved disciple; for he said to her, *Woman, behold thy son*: for whom henceforward thou must have a motherly affection; and to him, *Behold thy mother*; to whom thou must pay a filial duty: And so from that hour, that hour never to be forgotten, that disciple took her to his own home. See here,

1. The care Christ took of his dear mother. He was not so much taken up with a sense of his sufferings as to forget his friends; all whose concerns he bore upon his heart. His mother, perhaps, was so taken up with his sufferings, that she thought not what would become of her; but he admitted of that thought. Silver and gold he had none to leave, no estate real or personal; his clothes the soldiers had seized, and we hear no more of the bag since Judas, that had carried it, hanged himself. He had therefore no other way to provide for his mother, but by his interest in a friend, which he doth here.

(1.) He calls her woman, not mother, not out of any disrespect to her, but because mother would have been a cutting word to her that was already wounded to the heart with grief; like Isaac saying to Abraham, *My father*, He speaks as one that was now no more in this world, but was already dead

to those in it that were dearest to him. His speaking in this seemingly slight manner to his mother, as he had done formerly, was designed to obviate and give check to the undue honours which he foresaw would be given her in the Roman church, as if she were a joint purchaser with him in the honours of the Redeemer.

(2.) He directs her to look upon John as her son: *Behold him as thy son*, who stands there by thee, and be as a mother to him. See here, 1. An instance of divine goodness, to be observed for our encouragement. Sometimes, when God removes one comfort from us, he raiseth up another for us, perhaps, there, where we looked not for it. We read of children which the church shall have after she has lost the other, *Isa. xlix. 21*. Let none therefore reckon all gone with one cistern dried up, for from the same fountain another may be filled. 2. An instance of filial duty to be observed for our imitation. Christ has here taught children to the utmost of their power, to provide for the comfort of their aged parents. When David was in distress, he took care of his parents, and found out a shelter for them, *1 Sam. xxiii. 3*. to the Son of David here. Children, at their death, according to their ability, should provide for their parents, if they survive them, and need their kindness.

3. The confidence he reposed in the beloved disciple. It is to him he saith, *Behold thy mother*, i. e. I recommend her to thy care; be thou as a son to her, *guide her*, *Ira. li. 18*. and *not to forsake her when she is old*, *Prov. xxiii. 22*. Now, 1. This was an honour put upon John, and a testimony both to his prudence and to his fidelity: If he, who knows all things, had not known that John loved him, he would not have made him his mother's guardian. It is a great honour to be employed for Christ, and to be trusted with any of his interest in the world. But, 2. It would be a care and some charge to John, but he cheerfully accepted it, and took her to his own home, not objecting the trouble or expence, or his obligations to his own family, or the ill-will he might contract by it. Note, Those that truly love Christ, and are loved of him, will be glad of an opportunity to do any service to him, or his. *Nicephorus's Eccl. Hist. lib. ii. cap. iii.* saith, that the virgin Mary lived with John at Jerusalem eleven years, and then died. Others, that she lived to remove with him to Ephesus.

Fourthly, The fulfilling of the scripture in the giving of him vinegar to drink, ver. 28, 29. Observe,

1. How much respect Christ shewed to the scripture, ver. 28. *Knowing that all things hitherto were accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled*, which spake of his drinking in his sufferings, *he saith, I thirst*, that is, he called for drink.

(1.) It was not at all strange that he was thirsty; we find him thirsty in a journey, *John iv. 6, 7*. and now thirsty when he was just at his journey's end. Well might he thirst, after all the toil and hurry which he had undergone; and being now in the agonies of death, ready to expire purely by the loss of blood and extremity of pain. The torments of hell are represented by a violent thirst in the complaint of the rich man, that begged for a drop of water to cool his tongue. To that everlasting thirst we had been condemned, had not Christ suffered for us.

(2.) But the reason of his complaining of it is somewhat surprising; it is the only word he spoke that looked like complaint of his outward sufferings: When they scourged him, and crowned him with thorns, he did not cry, O my head, or my back! but now he cried, *I thirst*. For, 1. He would thus express the travail of his soul, *Ira. liii. 11*. He thirsted after the glorifying of God, and the accomplishment of the work of our redemption, and the happy issue of his undertaking. 2. He would thus take care to see the scripture fulfilled. Hitherto all had been accomplished, and he knew it: for this was the thing he had carefully observed all along; and now he called to mind one thing more, which this was the proper season for the performance of. By this it appears he was the Messiah, in that not only the scripture was punctually fulfilled in him, but it was strictly eyed by him. By this it appears that God was with him of a truth, that in all he did he went exactly according to the word of God, taking care not to destroy, but to fulfil the law and the prophets.

Now, 1. The scripture has foretold his thirst, and therefore he himself related it, because it could not otherwise be known, saying, *I thirst*; it was foretold that his tongue should cleave to his jaws, *Psal. cxviii. 15*. Samson, an eminent type of Christ, when he was laying the Philistines heap upon heaps, was himself sore athirst, *Judges xv. 18*. so was Christ, when he was upon the cross, *quoting principalities and powers*.

2. The scripture had foretold, that in his thirst he should have vinegar given him to drink, *Psal. lxix. 21*. They had given him vinegar to drink before they crucified him, *Matt. xxvii. 34*. but the prophecy was not exactly fulfilled in that, because that was not in his thirst; therefore now he said, *I thirst*, and called for it again; then he would not drink, but now he received it. Christ would rather court an affront, than see any prophecy unfulfilled. This should satisfy us under all our trials, that the will of God is done, and the word of God accomplished.

3. See how little respect his persecutors shewed to him, ver. 29. There was set a vessel full of vinegar, probably according to the custom at all executions of this nature; or, as others think, it was now set designedly for an abuse to Christ, instead of the cup of wine, which they used to give to them that were ready to perish; with that they filled a sponge, for they would not allow him a cup, and they put it upon hyssop, an hyssop-stalk, and with that heaved it to his mouth; *veronica ripides*, they stuck it round with hyssop, so it may be taken; or, as others, they mingled it with hyssop-water, and this they gave him to drink when he was thirsty; a drop of water would have cooled his tongue better than a draught of vinegar; yet this he submitted to for us; he had taken the four grapes, and thus his teeth were set on edge; we had forfeited all comforts and refreshments, and therefore they were withheld from him; when heaven denied him a beam of light, earth denied him a drop of water, and put vinegar in the room of it.

Fifthly, The dying word, wherewith he breathed out his soul, ver. 30. When he had received the vinegar, as much of it as he thought fit, he said, *It is finished*; and with that, bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. Observe,

(1.) What he said, and we may suppose him to say it with triumph and exultation, *τετέλεται*, *It is finished*, a comprehensive word, and a comfortable one.

1. *It is finished*, that is, the malice and enmity of his persecutors had now done its worst; when he had received that last indignity in the vinegar they gave him, he said, this is the last, I am now going out of their reach, where the wicked cease from troubling.

2. *It is finished*, i. e. the counsel and commandment of his Father concerning his sufferings was now fulfilled; it was a determinate counsel, and he took care to see every iota and tittle of it exactly answered; *Acts ii. 23*. He hath said, when he entered upon his sufferings, *Father, thy will be done*; and now he saith with pleasure, *It is done*. It was his meat and drink to finish his work, *John iv. 34*. and the meat and drink refreshed him, when they gave him gall and vinegar.

3. *It is finished*, i. e. all the types and prophecies of the Old Testament, which pointed at the suffering of the Messiah, were accomplished and answered: He speaks as if, now they had given him the vinegar, he could not

bethink himself of any word in the Old Testament that was to be fulfilled against him and his death, but it had its accomplishment; e. g. his being sold for thirty pieces of silver, his hands and feet pierced, his garments divided, &c. and now this is done, *It is finished*.

4. *It is finished*, i. e. the ceremonial law is abolished, and a period put to the obligation of it; the substance is now come, and all the shadows are done away: Just now the veil is rent, the wall of partition is taken down, even the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, *Eph. ii. 14, 15*. The Mosaic economy is dissolved, to make way for a better hope.

5. *It is finished*, i. e. sin is finished, and an end made of transgression, by the bringing in of an everlasting righteousness. It seems to refer to *Dan. ix. 24*. The Lamb of God was sacrificed to take away the sin of the world, and it is done, *Heb. ix. 26*.

6. *It is finished*, i. e. his sufferings were now finished, both those of his soul and those of his body; the storm is over, the worst is past; all his pains and agonies are at an end, and he is just going to paradise, entering upon the joy set before him. Let all that suffer for Christ and with Christ comfort themselves with this, that yet a little while, and they also shall say, *It is finished*.

7. *It is finished*, i. e. his life was now finished; but was just ready to breathe his last, and now he is no more in this world, *John xvii. 11*. This is like that of blessed Paul, *2 Tim. iv. 7*. I have finished my course, my race is run, my glass is out, *mene, mene*, numbered and finished. This we must all come to shortly.

8. *It is finished*, i. e. the work of man's redemption and salvation is now completed, at least the hardest part of the undertaking is over; a full satisfaction is made to the justice of God, a fatal blow given the power of Satan, a power of grace opened that shall ever flow, a foundation of peace and happiness laid that shall never fail. Christ had now gone through with his work, and finished it, *John xvii. 4*. For, as for God, his work is perfect; when I begin (saith he) I will also make an end. And as in the purchase, so in the application of the redemption, he that has begun a good work, will perform it; the mystery of God shall be finished.

(2.) What he did; he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. He was voluntary in dying; for he was not only the sacrifice, but the priest and the offerer; and the *animus offerentis* was all in all in the sacrifice: Christ shewed his will in his sufferings; by the which we are sanctified.

1. He gave up the ghost. His life was not forcibly extorted from him, but freely resigned. He had said, *Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit*, thereby expressing the intention of this act: I give up myself as a ransom for many; and accordingly he did give his spirit, paid down the price of pardon and life at his Father's hands: *Father, glorify thy name*.

2. He bowed his head. They that were crucified, in dying stretched up their heads to gasp for breath, and did not drop their heads till they had breathed their last; but Christ, to shew himself active in dying, bowed his head first, composing himself, as it were, to fall asleep. God had laid upon him the iniquity of us all, putting them upon the head of this great sacrifice; and some think, by this bowing of his head he would intimate his sense of the weight upon him: See *Psal. cxviii. 4—xi. 12*. The bowing of his head, shews his submission to the Father's will, and his obedience to death: He accommodated himself to his dying work, as Jacob, who gathered up his feet into the bed, and then yielded up the ghost.

31. The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath-day (for that sabbath-day was an high day) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. 32. Then came the soldiers, and break the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. 33. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they break not his legs. 34. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. 35. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. 36. For these things were done that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. 37. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him, whom they pierced.

The passage concerning the piercing of Christ's side after his death, is recorded only by this evangelist.

First, Observe the superstition of the Jews, which occasioned it, ver. 31. Because it was the preparation for the sabbath, and that sabbath-day, because it fell in the passover week, was a high day, that they might shew a veneration for the sabbath, would not have the dead bodies to remain on the crosses on the sabbath-day, but besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, which would be a certain, but cruel dispatch, and that then they might be buried out of sight.

Note here, 1. The esteem they would be thought to have for the approaching sabbath, because it was one of the days of unleavened bread, and, (some reckon) the day of the offering of the first fruits. Every sabbath-day is a holy day, and a good day, but this was a high day, *μικρά νύκτα* a great day. Passover sabbath-days are high days, sacrament days, supper days; communion days are high days, and there ought to be more than ordinary preparation for them; that these might be high days indeed to us, as the days of heaven.

2. The reproach which they reckoned it would be to that day, if the dead bodies should be left hanging upon the cross. Dead bodies were not to be left any time: *Deut. xxi. 23*. yet, in this case, the Jews would have been an offence to them; nor could they well bear the sight of Christ's crucified body; for, unless their consciences were quite seared, when the heat of their rage was a little over, they would upbraid them.

3. Their petition to Pilate, that their dead bodies, now as good as dead, might be dispatched; not by strangling or beheading them, which would have been a compassionate hastening them out of their misery, like the *coup de grace* (as the French call it) to them that are broke upon the wheel, the stroke of mercy, but by the breaking of their legs, which would carry them off in the most exquisite pain. Note, 1. The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. 2. The pretended sanctity of hypocrites is abominable. These Jews would be thought to bear a great regard to the sabbath, and yet had no regard to justice and righteousness; they made no conscience of bring-

ing an innocent and excellent person to the cross, and yet scrupled letting a dead body hang upon the cross.

Secondly, The dispatch of the *two thieves that were crucified with him*, ver. 32. Pilate was still gratifying the Jews, and gave orders as they desired: *and the soldiers came, hardened against all impressions of pity, and broke the legs of the two thieves*, which, no doubt, extorted from them hideous outcries, and made them die, according to the bloody disposition of Nero, so as to feel themselves die. One of these *thieves* was a penitent, and had received from Christ an assurance that he should shortly be with him in paradise; and yet died in the same pain and misery that the other thief did; for *all things come alike to all*; many go to heaven that have bands in their death and die in the bitterness of their soul. The extremity of dying agonies is no obstruction to the living comforts that wait for holy souls on the other side death: Christ died and went to paradise, but appointed a guard to convey him thither. This is the order of going to heaven, *Christ, the first fruits and forerunner, afterwards they that are Christ's*.

Thirdly, The trial that was made whether Christ was dead or no, and the putting it out of doubt.

1. They supposed him to be dead, and therefore did not break his legs, ver. 33. Observe here, 1. That Jesus died in less time than persons crucified ordinarily did: The structure of his body, perhaps, being extraordinary fine and tender, was the sooner broke by pain; or rather it was to shew that he laid down his life of himself, and could die when he pleased, though his hands were nailed: Though he yielded to death, yet he was not conquered. 2. That his enemies were satisfied he was really dead. The Jews, who stood by to see the execution effectually done, would not have balked this piece of cruelty, if they had not been sure he was got out of the reach of it. 3. *Whatever devices are in mens' hearts, the counsel of the Lord shall stand*. It was fully designed to break his legs, but God's counsel being otherwise, so how it was prevented.

2. Because they would be sure he was dead, they made such an experiment as would put it past dispute; *One of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, aiming at his heart, and forthwith came thereout blood and water*, ver. 34.

(1.) The soldier hereby designed to decide the question whether he was dead or no, and by this honourable wound in his side, to supersede the ignominious method of dispatch they took with the other two. Tradition saith this soldier's name was Longinus, and that, having some distemper in his eyes, he was immediately cured of it, by some drops of blood that flowed out of Christ's side lighting on them: Significant enough, if we had any good authority for the story.

(2.) But God had a further design herein, which was,

1. To give an evidence of the truth of his death, in order to the proof of his resurrection. If he was only in a trance or swoon, his resurrection was a sham; but, by this experiment, he was certainly dead, for this spear broke up the very fountains of life, and, according to all the law and course of nature, it was impossible a human body should survive such a wound as this in the vitals, and such an evacuation thence.

2. To give an illustration of the design of his death: There was much of mystery in it, and its being so solemnly attested, ver. 35. intimates, there was something miraculous in it, that the blood and water should come out distinct and separate from the same wound; however, that was very significant; this same apostle refers to it as a very considerable thing, 1 John v. 6—8.

(1.) The opening of his side was significant. When we would protest our sincerity, we wish there were a window in our hearts, that the thoughts and intents of them might be visible to all. Through this window, opened in Christ's side, you may look into his heart, and see love flaming there, love strong as death; see our own names written there. Some make it an allusion to the opening of Adam's side in innocency: When Christ, the second Adam, was fallen into a deep sleep upon the cross, then was his side opened, and out of it was his church taken, which he espoused to himself: See Eph. v. 30—32. Our devout poet, Mr. George Herbert, in his poem called *The bag*, very affectingly brings in our Saviour, when his side was pierced, thus speaking to his disciples,

*If ye have any thing to send, or write,
(I have no bag, but here is room)
Unto my Father's hand and sight
(Believe me) it shall safely come.
That I shall mind what you impart,
Look, you may put it very near my heart,
Or if hereafter any of my friends
Will use me in this kind, the door
Shall still be open; what he sends
I will present, and somewhat more,
Not to his hurt. Sighs will convey
Any thing to me. Mark, Despair, away.*

(2.) The blood and water that flowed out of it were significant:

1. They signified the two great benefits which all believers partake of through Christ, justification and sanctification: blood for remission, water for regeneration; blood for atonement, water for purification: Blood and water were used very much under the law. Guilt contracted must be expiated by blood: stains contracted must be done away by the water of purification: These two must always go together; *Ye are sanctified, ye are justified*, 1 Cor. vi. 11. Christ has joined them together, and we must not think to put them asunder: They both flow from the pierced side of our Redeemer. To Christ crucified we owe both merit for our justification, and Spirit and grace for our sanctification; and we have as much need of the latter as of the former, 1 Cor. i. 30.

2. They signified the two great ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, by which those benefits are represented, sealed and applied to believers; they both owe their institution and efficacy to Christ: It is not the water in the font that will be to us the washing of regeneration, but the water out of the side of Christ; not the blood of the grape that will pacify the conscience and refresh the soul, but the blood out of the side of Christ. Now was the rock smitten, 1 Cor. x. 4. now was the fountain opened, Zech. xiii. 1. now were the wells of salvation digged, Isa. xli. 3. Here is the river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God.

Fourthly, The attestation of the truth of this by an eye-witness, ver. 35. the evangelist himself. Observe,

(1.) What a competent witness he was of the matters of fact: 1. What he *dare record of he saw*; he had it not by hearsay, nor was it only his own conjecture, but he was an eye-witness of it; it is *what we have seen and looked upon*, 1 John i. 1. 2 Pet. i. 16. and *had perfect understanding of*, Luke i. 3. 2. What he *saw he faithfully bare record of*; as a faithful witness, he told not only the truth, but the whole truth; and did not only attest it by word of mouth, but left it upon record in writing, in *perpetuam rei memoriam*. 3. His record is undoubtedly true; for he wrote not only from his own personal knowledge and observation, but from the dictates of

the Spirit of truth, that leads into all truth. 4. He had himself a full assurance of the truth of what he wrote, and did not persuade others to believe that which he did not believe himself; he knows that he saith true. 5. He therefore witnessed these things that we might believe; he did not record them merely for his own satisfaction or the private use of his friends, but made them public to the world; not to please the curious or entertain the ingenious, but to draw men to believe the gospel in order to their eternal welfare.

(2.) What care he shewed in this particular instance. That we may be well assured, both of the truth of Christ's death, *he saw his heart's blood*, his life's blood let out; and also of the benefits that flow to us from his death, signified by the blood and water which came out of his side. Let this silence the fear of weak Christians, and encourage their hopes, *iniquity shall not be their ruin, for there came both water and blood out of Christ's pierced side*, both to justify and sanctify them; and if you ask, how can we be sure of this? you may be sure, for *he that saw it bare record*.

Fifthly, The accomplishment of the scripture in all this, ver. 36. *That the scripture should be fulfilled*, and so both the honour of the Old Testament may be preserved, and the truth of the New Testament confirmed. Here are two instances of it together.

(1.) *The scripture was fulfilled* in the preserving of his legs from being broke: therein that word was fulfilled, *A bone of him shall not be broken*.

1. There was a promise of this made indeed to all the righteous, but principally pointing at Jesus Christ the righteous, Psalm xxxiv. 20. *He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken*. And David in spirit saith, *All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee?* Psalm xxxv. 10.

2. There was a type of this in the paschal lamb, which seems to be especially referred to here, Exod. xii. 46. *Neither shall he break a bone thereof*; and it is repeated, Numb. ix. 12. *Ye shall not break any bone of it*; for which law the will of the law-maker is the reason, but the antitype must answer the type. Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, 1 Cor. v. 7. *He is the lamb of God*, John i. 29. and, as the true passover, his bones were kept unbroken. The commandment was given concerning his bones, when dead, as of Joseph's, Heb. xi. 22.

3. There was a significancy in it, the strength of the body is in the bones; the Hebrew word for the bones signifies the strength, and therefore not a bone of Christ must be broken, to shew, that though he be crucified in weakness, his strength to save is not at all broken: Sin breaks our bones, it broke David's, Psalm li. 8. but it did not break Christ's bones, he stood firm under the burden, mighty to save.

(2.) *The scripture was fulfilled* in the piercing of his side, ver. 37. *They shall look on him whom they have pierced*, so it is written, Zech. xii. 10. And there the same that pours out the Spirit of grace, and can be no less than the God of the holy prophets, saith, *They shall look upon me*, which is here applied to Christ, *they shall look upon him*. 1. It is here implied, that the Messiah shall be pierced; and here it had a more full accomplishment than in the piercing of his hands and feet; he was pierced by the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, wounded in the house of his friends, as it follows, Zech. xiii. 6. 2. It is promised that when the Spirit is poured out, *they shall look upon him and mourn*. This was in part fulfilled, when many of those that were his betrayers and murderers were pricked to the heart, and brought to believe in him: it will be further fulfilled in mercy, when all Israel shall be saved; and in wrath, when they who persisted in their infidelity shall see him whom they have pierced, and wail because of him, Rev. i. 7. But it is applicable to us all; we have all been guilty of piercing the Lord Jesus, and are all concerned with suitable affections to look on him.

38. ¶ And after this Joseph of Arimathea (being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews) besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. 39. And there came also Nicodemus (which at first came to Jesus by night) and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. 40. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. 41. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. 42. There laid they Jesus therefore, because of the Jews' preparation-day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

We have here an account of the burial of the blessed body of our Lord Jesus. The solemn funerals of great men use to be looked at with curiosity; the mournful funerals of dear friends use to be attended with concern: Come, come, see an extraordinary funeral, never was the like! Come and see a burial that conquered the grave, and buried it! a burial that beautified the grave, and softened it for all believers! Let us turn aside now, and see this great sight. Here is,

First, The body begged, ver. 38. This was done by the interest of Joseph of Ramah, or Arimathea, of whom no mention is made in all the New Testament story, but only in the narrative which each of the evangelists gives us of Christ's burial, wherein he was chiefly concerned. Observe,

1. The character of this Joseph. He was a disciple of Christ inognito, a better friend to Christ than he would willingly be known to be. It was his honour that he was a disciple of Christ; and some such there are, that are themselves great men, and unavoidably linked with ill men; but it was his weakness that he was so secretly, when he should have confessed Christ before men, yea, though he had told his preference by it. Disciples should openly own themselves, yet Christ may have many that are his disciples sincerely, though secretly; better secretly than not at all, especially if like Joseph here, they grow stronger and stronger. Some who in lesser trials have been timorous, yet in greater have been very courageous; so Joseph here. He concealed his affection to Christ for fear of the Jews, lest they should put him out of the synagogue, at least out of the Sanhedrin, which was all they could do. To Pilate the governor he went boldly, and yet feared the Jews. The impotent malice of those that can but curse and revile, and clamour, is sometimes more formidable even to wise and good men than one would think.

2. The part he bore in this affair. He having by his place access to Pilate, desired leave of him to dispose of the body. His mother and dear relations have neither spirit nor interest to attempt such a thing. His disciples were gone; if nobody appear, the Jews or soldiers would bury him with the thieves: therefore God raised up this gentleman to interpose in it, that the scripture might be fulfilled, and the decorum owing to his approaching resurrection maintained. Note, When God has work to do, he

can find out such as are proper to do it, and spirit them for it. Observe it as an instance of the humiliation of Christ, that his dead body lay at the mercy of an heathen judge, and must be begged before it could be buried. And also that Joseph would not take the body of Christ till he had asked and obtained leave of the governor; for in those things wherein the power of the magistrate is concerned, we must ever pay a deference to that power, and peaceably submit to it.

Secondly, The embalming prepared, *ver. 39.* This was done by Nicodemus, another person of quality, and in a public post. He brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, which some think bitter ingredients to preserve the body, others fragrant ones to perfume it. Here is,

1. The character of Nicodemus, which is much the same with that of Joseph; he was a secret friend to Christ, though not his constant follower. He at first came to Jesus by night, but now owned him publicly as before, *John vii. 51.* That grace which at first is like a bruised reed, may afterwards become like a strong cedar; and the trembling lamb bold as a lion. See *Rom. xiv. 4.* It is a wonder that Joseph and Nicodemus, men of such interest, did not appear sooner, and solicit Pilate not to condemn Christ, especially seeing him so loth to do it. Begging his life would have been a nobler piece of service than begging his body; but Christ would have none of his friends to endeavour to prevent his death when his hour was come. While his persecutors were forwarding the accomplishment of the scriptures, his followers must not obstruct it.

2. The kindness of Nicodemus, which was considerable, though of a different nature. Joseph served Christ with his interest, Nicodemus with his purse. Probably they agreed it between them, that while one was procuring the grant, the other should be preparing the spices; and that for expedition, because they were straitened for time.

But why did they make this ado about Christ's dead body?

1. Some think we may see it in the *weakness of their faith.* A firm belief of the resurrection of Christ the third day, would have saved them this care and cost, and have been more acceptable than all spices. Those bodies indeed to whom the grave is a *long home*, need to be clad accordingly; but what need of such furniture of the grave for one that, like a way-faring man, did but turn aside into it, to tarry for a night or two?

2. However, we may plainly see in it the *strength of their love.* Hereby they shewed the value they had for his person and doctrine, and that it was not lessened by the reproach of the cross. They that had been so industrious to profane his crown, and lay his honour in the dust, may already see that they imagine a vain thing: for as God had done him honour in his sufferings, so did men too, even *great men.* They shewed not only the *charitable respects* of committing his body to the earth, but the *honourable respects* shewed to *great men.* This they might do, and yet believe and look for his resurrection; nay, this they might do in the belief and expectation of it. Since God deligned honour for this body, they would put honour upon it. However, we must do our duty according as the present day and opportunity is, and leave it to God to fulfil his promises in his own way and time.

Thirdly, The body got ready, *ver. 40.* They took it into some house adjoining, and having washed it from blood and dust, wound it in linen clothes very decently, with the spices melted down, it is likely, into an ointment, as the manner of the Jews is to bury, or to embalm, so Dr. Hammond, as we fear dead bodies.

1. Here was care taken of Christ's body, it was wound in linen clothes. Among other clothing that belongs to us, Christ put on even the *grave-clothes*, to make them easy to us, and to enable us to call them our *wedding-clothes.* They wound the body with the spices, for all his garments, his grave-clothes not excepted, *smell of myrrh and aloes;* the spices here mentioned out of the ivory palaces, *Psal. xlv. 8.* and an ivory palace the sepulchre hewn out of a rock was to Christ. Dead bodies and graves use to be noisome and offensive; hence sin is compared to a body of death and an open sepulchre; but Christ's sacrifice being to God as a sweet smelling savour, hath taken away our pollution. No ointment or perfume can rejoice the heart, so as the grave of our Redeemer doth, where there is faith to perceive the fragrant odours of it.

2. In conformity to this example we ought to have regard to the dead bodies of Christians: not to enshrine and adore their relics, no not those of the most eminent saints and martyrs; nothing like that was done to the dead body of Christ himself, but carefully deposited, the dust in the dust, as those who believe the dead bodies of the saints are still united to Christ, and designed for glory and immortality at the last day. The resurrection of the saints will be in virtue of Christ's resurrection, and therefore in burying them we should have an eye to Christ's burial, for he being dead thus speaketh, *Thy dead men shall live, Isa. xvi. 19.* In burying our dead it is not necessary that in all circumstances, we imitate the burial of Christ, as if we must be buried in linen, and in a garden, and be embalmed as he was; but he being buried after the manner of the Jews, it teacheth us, that in things of this nature we should conform to the usages of the country where we live, except in those that are superstitious.

Fourthly, The grave pitched upon; in a garden which belonged to Joseph of Arimathea, very near the place where he was crucified. There was a sepulchre or vault prepared for the first occasion, but not yet used. Observe,

1. That Christ was buried without the city, for thus the manner of the Jews was to bury, not in their cities, much less in their synagogues, which some have thought better than our way of burying, yet there was then a peculiar reason for it, which doth not hold now, because the touching of a grave contracted a ceremonial pollution; but now the resurrection of Christ has altered the property of the grave, and done away its pollution for all believers, we need not keep at such a distance from it; nor is it incapable of a good improvement, to have the congregation of the dead in the church-yard, encompassing the congregation of the living in the church, since they also are dying, and in the midst of life we are in death. Those that would not superstitiously but by faith visit the holy sepulchre, must go forth out of the noise of this world.

2. That Christ was buried in a garden. Observe,

1. That Joseph had his sepulchre in his garden; so he contrived it, that it might be a memorandum, 1. To himself while living; when he was taking the pleasure of his garden, and reaping the products of it, let him think of dying, and be quickened to prepare for it. The garden is a proper place for meditation, and a sepulchre there may furnish us with a proper subject for meditation, and such a one as we are loth to admit in the midst of our pleasure. 2. To his heirs and successors when he was gone. It is good to acquaint ourselves with the place of our father's sepulchres; and perhaps we might make our own less formidable, if we made theirs more familiar.

2. That in a sepulchre, in a garden, Christ's body was laid. In the garden of Eden death and the grave first received their power, and now in a garden they are conquered, disarmed and triumphed over. In a garden Christ began his passion, and from a garden he would rise and begin his exaltation. Christ fell to the ground as a corn of wheat, *John xii. 24.* and therefore was

sown in a garden among the seeds; for *his dew is as the dew of herbs,* *Isa. xvi. 19.* He is the fountain of gardens. *Cant. iv. 15.*

3. That he was buried in a new sepulchre. This was so ordered, 1. For the honour of Christ; he was not a common person, and therefore must not mix with common dust. He that was born from a virgin womb, must rise from a virgin tomb. 2. For the confirming of the truth of his resurrection; that it might not be suggested that it was not he, but some other that rose now, when many bodies of saints arose; or, that he rose by the power of some other, as the man that was raised by the touch of Elisha's bones, and not by his own power. He that has made all things new, has new-made the grave for us.

Fifthly, The funeral solemnized. *Ver. 42.* There laid they Jesus, that is, the dead body of Jesus. Some think the calling of that Jesus intimates the inseparable union between the divine and human nature. Even this dead body was Jesus, a Saviour, for his death is our life; Jesus is still the same, *Heb. xiii. 8.* There they laid him because it was the preparation-day.

1. Observe here the deference which the Jews paid to the sabbath, and to the day of preparation. Before the passover sabbath they had a solemn day of preparation. This day had been ill kept by the chief priests, who called themselves the church, but was well kept by the disciples of Christ, who were branded as dangerous to the church; and it is often so. 1. They would not put off the funeral till the sabbath-day, because the sabbath is to be a day of holy rest and joy, with which the business and sorrow of a funeral do not well agree. 2. They would not drive it too late on the day of preparation for the sabbath. What is to be done the evening before the sabbath, should be so contrived, as that it may neither intrench upon sabbath-time, nor indispose us for sabbath-work.

2. Observe the convenience they took of an adjoining sepulchre, the sepulchre they made use of was nigh at hand. Perhaps if they had had time they would have carried him to Bethany, and buried him among his friends there. And I am sure he had more right to have been buried in the chief of the sepulchres of the sons of David, than any of the kings of Judah had; but it was so ordered, that he should be laid in a sepulchre nigh at hand. Because he was to lie there but a while, as in an inn, and therefore he took the first that offered itself. 2. Because this was a new sepulchre. They that prepared it little thought who should haue it; but the wisdom of God has reached infinitely beyond ours, and makes what use he pleaseth of us and all we have. 3. We are hereby taught not to be over-curious in the place of our burial. Where the tree falls why should it not lie? For the Christ was buried in the sepulchre that was next at hand. It was faith in the promise of Canaan, that directed the Patriarchs' desires to be carried thither for a burying-place; but now that promise is superseded by a better, that cure is over.

Thus without pomp or solemnity is the body of Jesus laid in the cold and silent grave. Here lies our surety under arrest for our debts, so that if he be released his discharge will be ours. Here is the fun of righteousness set for awhile to rise again in greater glory, and set no more. Here lies a seeming captive to death, but a real conqueror over death; for here lies death itself slain, and the grave conquered. Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory.

C H A P. XX.

This evangelist, though he began not his gospel as the rest did, yet concludes it as they did, with the history of Christ's resurrection; not of the thing itself, for none of them describe how he rose, but of the proofs and evidences of it, which demonstrated that he was risen. The proofs of Christ's resurrection which we have in this chapter, are, 1. Such as occurred immediately at the sepulchre. (1.) The sepulchre found empty, and the grave-clothes in good order, *ver. 1—10.* (2.) Two angels appearing to Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, *ver. 11—13.* (3.) Christ himself appearing to her, *ver. 14—18.* 2. Such as occurred afterwards, at the meeting of the apostles. (1.) At one, the same day at evening that Christ rose, when Thomas was absent, *ver. 19—25.* At another, that day seven-night when Thomas was with them, *ver. 26—31.* And what is related here is mostly what was omitted by the other Evangelists.

1. **T**HE first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. 2. Then she runneth and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. 3. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. 4. So they run both together: And the other disciple did out-run Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. 5. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying: yet went he not in. 6. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie. 7. And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. 8. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed. 9. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. 10. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

There was no one thing which the apostles were more concerned to produce substantial proof of than the resurrection of their Master. 1. Because that was it which he himself had appealed to as the last and most cogent proof of his being the Messiah. They that would not believe other signs, were referred to this sign of the prophet Jonas. And therefore the enemies were more solicitous to sile the notice of this, because it was put on this issue; and if he be risen, they are not only murderers, but murderers of the Messiah. 2. Because this was that upon which the performance of his undertaking for our redemption and salvation did depend. If he gave his life a ransom, and do not resume it, it doth not appear that his giving of it was accepted as a satisfaction. If he be imprisoned for our debt, and lie by it, we are undone, *1 Cor. xv. 17.* Because he never shewed himself alive after his resurrection to all the people, *Acts x. 40, 41.* We would have said, let his ignominious death be private, and his glorious resurrection public.